Tough love

Craig Revel Horwood on being Strictly's harshest judge

→ **Interview** *G2*



Spain football boss finally quits after World Cup kiss

→ *News*



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The Guardian

Newspaper of the year

The Moroccan village where death came in the night

Peter Beaumont
Moulay Brahim

In a narrow passage in the village of Moulay Brahim in Morocco's Atlas mountains, a house had spilled across the lane in a drift of sandy ruins. It was largely unrecognisable for what it once was, save for the unlikely survival of a solitary room left beached atop the rubble, the blue paint of its walls still visible.

Abderahim Imni, with his hand bandaged from where he was injured by falling masonry during Friday's devastating earthquake, was directing the clean-up in the street where his home once stood.

An electrician, aged 43, he was sleeping in the part of his house that survived with three family members when 7 →



▲ *Women at the funeral of two victims of the earthquake in the Moroccan village of Moulay Brahim yesterday* PHOTOGRAPH: HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS

184,000 cancer cases in UK this year 'were preventable'

Denis Campbell
Health policy editor

A growing epidemic of preventable cancers will lead to an estimated 184,000 people in the UK being diagnosed with the disease this year and will cost the country more than £78bn, research reveals.

Cancer caused by smoking, drinking, obesity and sunburn leads to £40bn a year in lost productivity, costs the people affected £30bn and takes up £3.7bn of the NHS's budget, the study says. Preventable cancers also cost families and carers £3.4bn and the social care system £1.3bn.

The stark findings have sparked calls by doctors and public health campaigners for a crackdown on smoking, drinking and poor diet to reduce avoidable cancers because of the huge human and financial toll.

Organisations such as Cancer Research UK (CRUK) and the World Cancer Research Fund estimate that about 40% of all cancers, in the UK and worldwide, are potentially preventable because they are closely linked to lifestyle factors such as diet, smoking and sunburn.

"This report is a stark reminder of the countless lives that could be saved by preventing cancer and a call to the UK government that health prevention strategies are key to relieving pressures on our NHS and economy," said Michelle Mitchell, CRUK's chief executive.

She called for "bold political action" to tackle tobacco and bad diet, adding: "If recent trends continue, smoking could cause around 1m more cancer cases in the UK between now and 2040. And more than 21 million UK adults could be obese, which would increase their risk of over 13 types of cancer."

The findings are contained in a study of the societal and economic costs of preventable cancers in the UK undertaken by Frontier Economics for the Guardian. Frontier, a leading economics consultancy, specialises in projecting the costs of diseases using data published by government, official and medical bodies. The £78bn cost is the equivalent of 3.5% of GDP, it found. 2 →

China spy allegations Sunak voices alarm after arrest of parliamentary researcher

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News

Spanish football head resigns after global outcry at World Cup final kiss

Sam Jones *Madrid*
Harry Taylor

Luis Rubiales has resigned as the head of Spain's football federation almost a month after his decision to grab and kiss the midfielder Jenni Hermoso following the country's victory in the Women's World Cup sparked fury, incredulity and a global debate on sexism.

Rubiales had initially attempted to brush off the controversy over the unsolicited kiss after the team's 1-0 win against England in Sydney. He dismissed critics of his actions as "idiots and stupid people" as the incident provoked outrage, led to his being provisionally suspended by Fifa, and prompted Hermoso to make a criminal complaint accusing him of sexual assault.

Last night Piers Morgan released a clip from a TalkTV interview due to be aired tomorrow in which Rubiales told him that he would step down.

Rubiales said: "I cannot continue my work. My father, my daughters, I spoke with them … Some friends very close to me, they say to me: 'Luis, now you have to focus on your dignity and to continue your life. Probably you are going to damage people you love.'"

Later Rubiales released a defiant statement, announcing that he had decided to step down as the president of the Royal Spanish Football Federation and as a Uefa vice-president.

"After the rapid suspension by Fifa – and the rest of the proceedings against me – it's clear that I cannot return to my post," he said.

"Trying to hang on in hope or clinging on won't result in anything positive for either the federation or for Spanish football."



'Trying to hang on in hope or clinging on won't result in anything positive'

Luis Rubiales
Statement last night



▲ *Top, Luis Rubiales with Spain's head coach, Jorge Vilda. Above, Rubiales kisses Jenni Hermoso after her team won the World Cup final*
PHOTOGRAPH: MANU FERNANDEZ/AP

The 46-year-old former player claimed there were "real powers that would get in the way of my return", adding: "I don't want Spanish football to be damaged because of a campaign as disproportionate as this one." He also said he had decided to quit after satisfying himself that his departure would help bring stability to Spain, Portugal and Morocco's joint bid to host the 2030 World Cup.

Rubiales said he planned to clear his name. "I believe in the truth and I will do everything in my power to make sure it prevails," he said.

He added that while his family and friends had suffered "the effects of an excessive persecution", he felt "the truth" was known on the streets.

After the initial outcry his mother, Ángeles Béjar, went on hunger strike to protest against her son's treatment, locking herself in a church in Motril, Spain, for several days.

Pressure on Rubiales had intensified on Wednesday after Hermoso filed a criminal complaint against him. The prosecutor's office said that under a recently passed sexual consent law, Rubiales could face a fine or between one and four years in prison if found guilty of sexual assault.

In a statement published late last month, Hermoso said the incident had left her feeling "vulnerable and a victim of aggression". She described the kiss as an "impulsive act, sexist, out of place and without any type of consent from my part".

Her statement had followed days of uproar during which Rubiales rounded on his critics before offering an apology widely seen as half-hearted. He later sought to portray the kiss as consensual.

Soon after, Rubiales was provisionally suspended by Fifa and ordered to refrain from contact with Hermoso and those close to her. Days later, the federation demanded that he resign.

The episode made headlines around the world and led to a global debate about sexism and abuses of power. In an interview with the Guardian this month, Spain's acting equality minister said Rubiales's unwanted kissing of Hermoso was just one instance of the abuse suffered by millions of women around the world.

Irene Montero described the incident as a "lower-intensity" form of sexual violence that is often invisible and normalised in society.

Montero greeted the news of Rubiales's resignation with a two-word tweet: "Se acabó [It's over]" in a reference to the #SeAcabó hashtag that had been used in the aftermath of the kiss and hailed as Spain's #MeToo moment.

Study suggests 184,000 cancer cases this year were avoidable

Continued *from page 1*

It estimates that on current trends the number of avoidable cancer diagnoses will rise from 184,000 to 226,000 a year by 2040 because of population changes. Between now and then, 3.7 million people will be diagnosed who would not have developed cancer if it had not been for the four known main risk factors – smoking, drinking, obesity and UV radiation. Those cases combined will cost the UK £1.26tn, Frontier believes.

Doctors and public health experts say the government must confront powerful lobbies such as the food industry. Existing measures are ineffective and give too much influence to vested interests such as the alcohol trade, which means meaningful change is stymied, they say.

Frontier's report looked at the four most preventable cancers: skin, lung, bowel and breast cancer. It says 79% of the 54,500 cases of lung cancer diagnosed in the UK each year are preventable and almost three-quarters of those are caused by tobacco. For melanoma, 87% of the 20,500 cases could have been avoided if people had not been exposed to UV radiation through spending time in the sun.

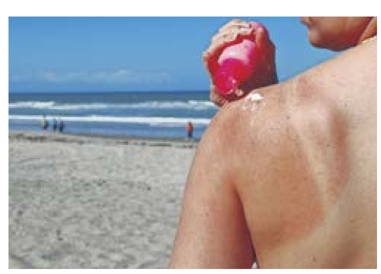
In addition, 54% of bowel cancers are deemed preventable because they are linked to a lack of fibre, processed meat intake or being overweight. Almost one in four of the 61,500 new cases of breast cancer in the UK every year are deemed preventable because they involve excess weight or alcohol.

Overall, 97,500 of the 179,000 cases of those four cancers combined that will be diagnosed this year – 54% of the total – will have been preventable, Frontier found. The £30bn cost of avoidable cancer to individuals reflects mainly lost quality of life when they are ill (£4.3bn) and the fact that some people die early (£25.3bn).

Last week, research reported in BMJ Oncology found the number of under-50s diagnosed with cancer worldwide had risen by 79% between 1990 and 2019. The authors said obesity, inactivity, alcohol and smoking were likely to help explain the surge, alongside factors such as pollution.

The British Medical Association has urged ministers to take action "to reduce the availability and attractiveness of products such as alcohol, tobacco and junk food that contribute to a large number of preventable diseases, including some cancers".

The Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS) said ministers should force alcohol producers to use labelling that makes clear drinking increases the risk of cancer. Dr Sadie Boniface, its head of research, said: "In 2020 alone,



▲ *Almost nine in 10 diagnoses of melanoma are linked to UV*

almost 17,000 cancers due to alcohol were diagnosed in the UK."

Hazel Cheeseman, of Action on Smoking and Health, said the age at which people could buy tobacco should rise to 21, and tobacco firms should face a "polluter pays" levy.

Mitchell, of CRUK, said the government was likely to miss its target for England to be "smoke-free" by 2030, and measures to tackle obesity – such as banning multi-buy deals on junk food – had been delayed.

Matthew Bell, a director of Frontier Economics, said: "Reducing the sizable number of people with these cancers could be a central element to reducing some costs for the NHS."

The Department of Health and Social Care did not respond directly to the findings, but it said it was committed to tackling the causes of preventable cancer, adding: "We have introduced calorie labelling, announced a £40m pilot [for obesity drugs] … and will help 1m smokers across England quit by giving them a free vaping starter kit. There are record numbers of cancer checks in the NHS and our major conditions strategy will set out further plans to tackle the main causes of ill-health."

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She's put a spell on us: Desert Island castaways' top choice now Nina Simone

Robert Booth
Michael Goodier

Nina Simone is the undisputed queen of Desert Island Discs after castaways chose her songs more than any other artist in 2022.

The American jazz singer and pianist is the first black person to become a year's most selected artist in eight decades of the BBC's radio show, analysis of more than 3,200 episodes by the Guardian reveals. Guests from John Legend to Adele to Winnie Byanyima, a UN under-secretary-general, chose her tunes last year, helping Simone, a performer of "reckless, blazing dignity" according to the Guardian's jazz critic, keep classical music off the top spot.

In a further sign of changing tastes, What a Wonderful World, sung by Louis Armstrong, and Simone's Feeling Good have joined David Bowie's Life on Mars? among the most popular song selections since 2010.

While extracts from Handel's Messiah and Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro remain the most popular choices in the show's 81-year history, rock and pop are now more popular than classical music, with Ghost Town by the Specials and Sultans of Swing by Dire Straits the most popular song choices since 2020.

In 2020, the year of the Black Lives Matter protests, Simone rose to equal top among the most selected artists alongside Bowie, the Rolling Stones and Mozart. The North Carolina-born jazz diva's subsequent solo dominance comes as black people are increasingly invited to be guests on the show, now hosted by Lauren Laverne. John Goudie, the editor of the show, said: "We're reflecting the changing shape of society."

In 2002, about 4% of guests were black, rising to about 18% last year, the Guardian estimates. They included Jay Blades, who presents The Repair Shop, the actor David Harewood and Oti Mabuse, the former Strictly Come Dancing professional dancer.

Goudie said: "The other important thing is the variety of music that [Simone] performed offers castaways a whole range of experiences. There are songs that lift you up and songs that have a real political edge … For some people it's absolutely all about the voice. Other people, it's about the message."

Since the start of 2020, 17 guests have chosen 12 different Simone tracks. They range from her version of Strange Fruit, a song about racist lynchings in the southern US previously recorded by Billie Holiday, which, in Simone's words, "tears at the guts of what white people have done to my people in this country", to her takes on Randy Newman's Baltimore and the Beatles' Here Comes the Sun.

Edward Enninful, the editor-in-chief of British Vogue, who was the fashion bible's first black editor, chose Strange Fruit when he appeared on the show in 2022. He said that when he heard it as a schoolboy in London "it was the first time I realised being black really was difficult".









▲ *The jazz singer and pianist Nina Simone, whose songs have been picked by castaways including, from top left, writer Bernadine Evaristo, Edward Enninful, editor in chief of British Vogue, and Winnie Byanyima of the UN. Since 2020, 12 of Simone's songs have been chosen*
PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/ GETTY IMAGES

In 2020, Bernardine Evaristo, the Booker prize-winning novelist, picked I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free and recalled how she used the song to open shows she staged at community centres in the 1980s with the groundbreaking Theatre of Black Women.

Goudie said the changing tone of the playlists was also down to "the absolutely enormous range of music" people could access through streaming.

Simone joins the Beatles, Queen, Frank Sinatra and Joni Mitchell among the only non-classical artists to top the playlists in any given year, which for decades have been dominated by Handel, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven and Bach. Simone's love for the latter, she said in her memoir, "made me dedicate my life to music".

The Guardian analysis – building on data from the Alan Turing Institute – showed an increase in the diversity of the castaways' jobs since 2020. Recent years have seen proportionally fewer guests from "traditional" Desert Island Discs professions such as musicians, artists, actors and writers.

They still dominate, but there has been a rise in representation of other walks of life including, in 2023, the climate scientist Prof Corinne Le Quéré and the Iceland supermarket co-founder Sir Malcolm Walker.

Classical music has fallen from more than half of song choices in the 1990s to less than 10% last year. Rock is the largest single category – making up one in five selections. In recent years, there has been more rap, hip-hop and grime – with Eminem's Lose Yourself and Public Enemy's Fight the Power the most popular tracks.

The actor Alan Bates was the first castaway to choose Simone in 1976, when he selected her jaunty paean to human resilience Ain't Got No – I Got Life.

On the record
Guests' top picks

2012 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
2013 Mozart
2014 Johann Sebastian Bach
2015 Bach
2016 The Beatles
2017 Queen, the Beatles
2018 Mozart
2019 Bach, Joni Mitchell, Mozart
2020 Nina Simone, David Bowie, the Rolling Stones and Mozart
2021 Mozart
2022 Nina Simone



Desert island favourites Mick Jagger, Mozart and David Bowie

MPs express alarm after researcher's arrest over alleged spying for China

Peter Walker
Kiran Stacey
Dan Sabbagh

MPs have reacted with alarm after it emerged that a parliamentary researcher with links to senior Conservatives and potential access to sensitive information had been arrested over allegations of spying for China.

The man, who is in his 20s and was arrested in March along with another person, is known to have held a parliamentary pass, allowing him unescorted access to large parts of the Westminster estate.

MPs said there was a need to tighten up the procedures for issuing such passes, with some expressing anger that the man had reportedly been able to work with a series of senior MPs, some of whom are now ministers, on foreign affairs issues including relations with China.

"Parliament can be a bit like a sieve," one MP with an interest in China policy said. "It's still pretty easy to get sponsored for a pass, and there are all sorts of parliamentary groups which do it."

At the end of his visit to the G20 summit in Delhi, Rishi Sunak personally challenged the Chinese premier, Li Qiang, over the allegations, first reported by the Sunday Times.

After the meeting, Sunak said: "I obviously can't comment on the specifics of an ongoing investigation but with regard to my meeting with Premier Li, what I said very specifically is that I raised a range of concerns we have in areas of disagreement, and in particular my very strong concerns about any interference in our parliamentary democracy, which is obviously unacceptable."

The meeting had not been scheduled, but was confirmed yesterday morning after news of the arrests broke. The issue was the first thing Sunak raised during their 20-minute encounter, to which Li responded that the two countries had "differences in opinion".

Sunak, who was returning to the UK late yesterday, is likely to face calls for an urgent question in the Commons today about the incident.

Some MPs have privately raised worries about the potential roles of Alicia Kearns, the Tory MP who chairs the Commons foreign affairs select committee, and Tom Tugendhat, the security minister. Both have taken a strong interest in China-related matters and are heavily critical of Beijing. The alleged spy is understood to have had contact with both of them, albeit only briefly in the case of Tugendhat and before he became a minister.

Kearns declined to comment, but said: "While I recognise the public interest, we all have a duty to ensure any work of the authorities is not jeopardised."

The revelations risk igniting a new row inside the Conservative party about the wisdom of normal ties with Beijing, after James Cleverly became the first foreign secretary in five years to visit China last month and met senior government members.

While Cleverly argued that it was not "credible" to disengage with the world's second-largest economy (a view publicly endorsed by Sunak) ahead of his visit a report from Kearns's committee said the UK had to more strongly tackle China on rights abuses and help Taiwan deter a possible invasion.

Iain Duncan Smith, a former Conservative leader who has repeatedly urged a more sceptical approach towards Beijing, said the dangers of what he called an "ambivalent" approach had been highlighted by the spying allegations.

"I think we are deeply penetrated by the Chinese because of our ambivalent attitude towards them," he told Times Radio. "People like me get criticised because we make too much of this and then you see this happening.



▲ *A researcher arrested under the Official Secrets Act had a pass giving unescorted access to parliament*
PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY RAIN/EPA

If you can penetrate parliament like this over such a long period of time, then how many other institutions with less levels of security are being penetrated on a daily basis?"

The parliamentary researcher, reported to be in his 20s, was arrested on 13 March in Edinburgh, the Metropolitan police said. That was the same day the other suspect, a man in his 30s, was detained in Oxfordshire. A search was made at a property in east London. Both people were held on suspicion of offences under section 1 of the Official Secrets Act , connected to alleged deeds "prejudicial to the safety or interests of the state". They were bailed until early October.

A number of ministers and Conservative MPs have previously expressed alarm, some in private, over fears that their views on China have led to them, and in some cases even to their relatives, being targeted by Beijing.

In July, the Commons intelligence and security committee warned that China was targeting Britain "prolifically and aggressively". MPs on the committee also said the government did not have the "resources, expertise or knowledge" to tackle the threat.

In 2022, MI5 formally told MPs that Christine Lee, a prominent London-based solicitor, was believed to be involved in "political interference activities" on behalf of China's ruling regime.

Lee, who donated nearly £600,000 to the office of the Labour MP and former shadow cabinet member Barry Gardiner, rejected the claims, as did the Chinese embassy. She launched a legal action against MI5 in July, suing the agency for compensatory damages, arguing she was unable to work and travel due to the allegations.

Analysis
Dan Sabbagh



Calling out Chinese 'spying' at G20 proves that espionage is always ultimately political

If it proves to be the case that China has recruited a Briton, who held a coveted job as a researcher in Westminster, as an agent, it represents a significant escalation in Beijing's intelligence targeting of the UK.

Chinese spying was once focused on the hacking and stealing of intellectual property. More recently there have been signs of a growth in human intelligence, using undercover Chinese nationals.

In 2020, three alleged Chinese agents were quietly expelled. They had been posing as journalists for one of the country's press agencies. But despite this apparent failure, the effort to recruit agents appears to have stepped up. MI5 issued a rare "interference alert" warning to MPs in January 2022, accusing Christine Lee, an Anglo-Chinese lawyer, of seeking to improperly influence British parliamentarians on behalf of China's ruling Communist party. Lee rejects the accusation and in July sued MI5 for compensatory damages, arguing she was unable to work and travel.

This time it is a Briton in their 20s, who spent time previously working in China, who is in focus. Records show he held a parliamentary pass at the time of his arrest in March on suspicion of breaching the Official Secrets Act, and worked in international policy, including on China, for a handful of Conservative MPs.

So far there has been no prosecution and the person has been released on bail until October, and it remains possible no criminal proceedings will develop. Turning covertly obtained intelligence into evidence that can be properly presented to a court can be complicated, and it may be that spy agency suspicions are not grounded in hard fact.

Meanwhile, at the G20 in Delhi, Rishi Sunak challenged the Chinese premier, Li Qiang, over Chinese interference in the UK parliament.

Espionage is always ultimately political, not just in its intent but in the decision to call it out. Until two years ago, Britain was anxious about publicly upsetting China, which was why news of the expulsions of 2020 only leaked out the following year. There has been something of a shift in policy. Lee, though never herself arrested or prosecuted, was in effect called out publicly.

This time a leak has emerged as Sunak attends the G20 summit, where China is present, even if president Xi Jinping is not. It is hard to conclude the timing is coincidental given Downing Street's briefing. That may help Sunak sound tougher after criticisms from hawkish Tory backbenchers, including the former prime minister Liz Truss, who have been unhappy the UK has not been willing to describe Beijing as a threat, even though such language would take Britain beyond other western allies.

China remains interested in the workings of Britain's democracy, another reminder that state competition is back

But it is unwise to be too cynical. Intelligence chiefs have been warning for years the threat from Beijing is increasing. In July, the foreign intelligence agency MI6 said it devoted more resources to China than Russia. The question, however, is what form it might take. Beijing's intentions are often poorly understood in the UK, and at times its intelligence efforts had appeared slight, focused on obtaining relatively basic information. Unlike Russia, which has carried out poisonings in Britain, the direct harm posed also appears limited.

China remains interested in the workings of Britain's parliamentary democracy, another reminder that the era of state competition is back. Nothing could be more reminiscent of the cold war than foreign powers running agents in Britain.

Starry starry night
Brexiters' fury over EU flag at Proms finale
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Sara Sharif
Family negotiate for fugitives to surrender
Page 11

Capture of terror suspect hailed as triumph for new anti-terror centre

Matthew Weaver

The capture of the escaped terrorism suspect Daniel Khalife has been hailed as a vindication of a decision to bring together police and the intelligence agencies into a new £412m surveillance centre.

The four-day search for Khalife was coordinated at the Counter Terrorism Operations Centre (CTOC) in West Brompton, London, where counter-terror police worked alongside members of MI5 and MI6 for the first time in a manhunt.

The situation room at the centre has access to spy technology including facial recognition, the CCTV network and phone tracking data. The use of this surveillance, including intercepted phones of those linked to Khalife, are all thought to have been used in the search.

The Met's counter-terrorist commander, Dominic Murphy, said the centre, which opened in 2021, played a central role in Khalife's capture.

He said: "One of the unusual things about this investigation is for the first time we've run this type of inquiry from our new CTOC, which brings counter-terrorism policing, SO15, into close proximity to all our partners."

He added: "This was the first big operation they did and it shows this is working because we're working very closely."

After Khalife, 21, was charged with escaping custody yesterday the focus turned to wider issues of staffing and resources in the Prison Service.

Alex Chalk, the justice secretary, said 40 of the 1,600 prisoners inside Wandsworth prison in south-west London had been moved to other prisons, and that the preliminary findings of an internal inquiry into the escape should be ready by the end of the week.

Asked if he had confidence in the prison's governor, Katie Price, Chalk twice dodged the question, telling Sky News: "I'm absolutely confident in the senior leadership of the Prison Service to conduct a rigorous, searching and fair investigation."

The Mail on Sunday reported that the security forces had obtained phone tapping warrants on those linked to Khalife, leading police to a house in Richmond on Saturday morning where they just missed their target.

Police confirmed that shortly after the raid in Richmond they had received a tipoff that Khalife had been seen in Spencer Road in Chiswick and another that he had been seen at the junction of Chiswick Mall and Church Street. However, again they could not find him.

Then at 10.40am he was found several miles north-east of Chiswick riding a bike on a tow path in Greenford. Police appeared to be lying in wait. Witnesses said he was pushed off his bike by an armed plain-clothes officer and soon after up to 60 officers arrived at the scene.

Murphy said Khalife's arrest was the culmination of "an incredible effort by the investigation team". He also thanked the public for more than 100 tipoffs of potential sightings.

Murphy defended the time it took to catch Khalife. Speaking on Saturday evening, he said: "It's been about 75 hours since he went missing from the prison to the point of his arrest. That's pretty quick given the challenges."

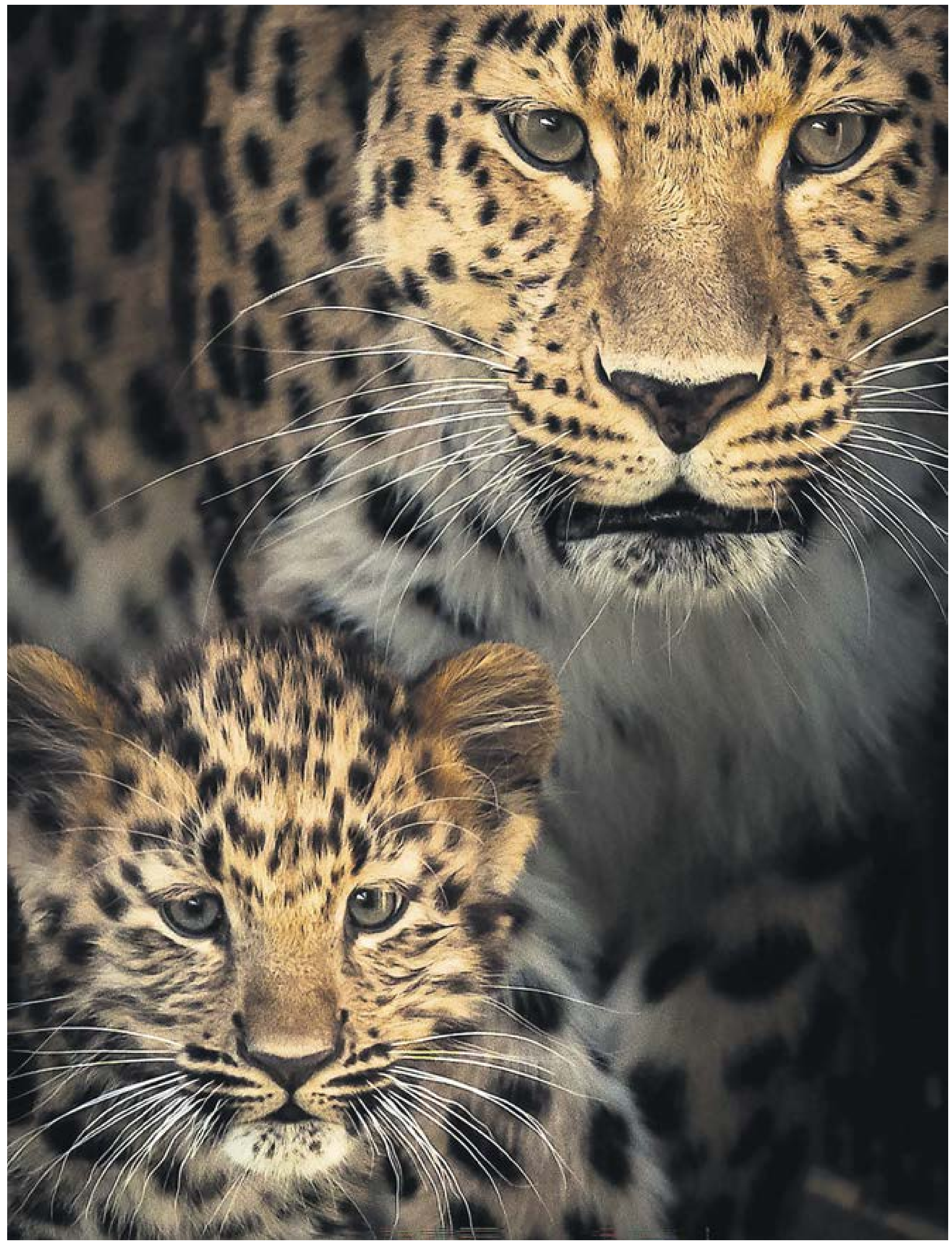
The CTOC was built in response to intelligence failures exposed by a series of terrorist attacks in 2017 – in Westminster, the Manchester Arena, London Bridge, the Finsbury Park mosque and Parsons Green.

When the CTOC was opened, Ken McCallum, the director general of MI5, said: "We know our chances of success are better when we combine the knowledge and the skills of experts from different organisations, fighting terrorism as a single team. CTOC is a massive next step on that journey – a world first.

"CTOC is built around the needs of the public, not the convenience of institutions."



▲ *Daniel Khalife was captured on Saturday after a four-day manhunt*



Spot check
Kristen, a female Amur leopard at the Yorkshire Wildlife Park, guards her three-month-old baby. The cub is the sole addition this year to a European breeding programme, involving 48 zoos, which aims to help save the critically endangered mammals.

PHOTOGRAPH: DANNY LAWSON/PA WIRE

Alastair Stewart reveals vascular dementia diagnosis

Mark Brown

Alastair Stewart, one of Britain's longest serving and most familiar newsreaders, has revealed he has been diagnosed with dementia.

The 71-year-old was one of ITV's flagship newsreaders for more than three decades and most recently presented programmes for the rightwing TV channel GB News.

In an interview with the Camilla Tominey Show on GB News yesterday, he said he had been diagnosed with vascular dementia.

Stewart said he had started feeling "a bit discombobulated" about six to nine months ago. "I wasn't becoming forgetful but things like doing your shoelaces properly – that's how I wear these lovely moccasins now – making sure your tie was straight, remembering that the call time for your programme is four o'clock and not five o'clock, not turning up early or late, and stuff like that."

He said he had decided to go to his GP. "I said I'm really worried I might have dementia, early onset dementia." His GP said it might be old age but Stewart needed a scan.

"I had a scan and it was like a scene from Casualty or Emergency Ward 10, because the results come back and I had indeed had a series of minor strokes that are called infarct strokes. Not the big one … it's like peppershots. The cumulative effect of that was that I had a diagnosis of early onset vascular dementia."



▲ *Stewart said he had had a series of minor strokes 'like peppershots'*

Stewart said the diagnosis had led to him stopping smoking, going on longer dog walks and trying to keep his brain active with puzzles.

The hardest thing, he said, was the impact on his wife, Sally. "We've been married for nearly half a century, and, you know, your life partner, your lover, all of those descriptions that are personal and intimate, that person is reduced – I choose my words very carefully – almost to a carer."

Stewart said his wife had to make sure he was ready for the interview and that his "tie was done properly".

He added: "If you do think that there's something wrong with you, go and see the GP. Listen to what he or she says. But also do remember that the people you work with and the people you live with and share your life with are the most important people in the entire world. And they are there if you're lucky enough, as I was, to help you."

Stewart said he was still "on the books" of GB News and hoped to make programmes in the future.



▲ *People in the ruins of Tafeghaghte, near Marrakech. Morocco has begun three days of national mourning*
PHOTOGRAPH: FADEL SENNA/AFP/GETTY

Moroccans tell of digging out their neighbours after quake

Ruth Michaelson
Dounia Z Mseffer *Casablanca*

Rescuers in Morocco were yesterday trying to find survivors in the rubble of collapsed buildings as the country began three days of mourning for victims of a disaster that killed more than 2,000 people and left many more injured and homeless.

Friday's 6.8-magnitude quake, Morocco's deadliest in more than six decades, had an epicentre below a remote cluster of mountainous villages 45 miles south of Marrakech, and shook infrastructure as far away as the country's northern coast.

The government reported that at least 2,012 people were killed and more than 2,059 injured, many of them critically. In Marrakech, many people slept outside, fearing returning to their homes.

Emergency services rushed to reach remote villages where many more victims were feared trapped.

Morocco's King Mohammed VI chaired an emergency disaster response meeting on Saturday afternoon and declared three days of national mourning. Civil protection units were deployed to increase stocks in blood banks and ensure the supply of resources including water, food, tents and blankets to affected areas, the palace said.

Omar Bajjou, from near Asni at the foot of the Atlas mountains, said the force of the earthquake threw him out of bed, terrifying him and his wife.

Fleeing outside, they found chaos in their village. "All of the surrounding houses, especially the mud-brick ones, had crumbled, and the others had huge cracks in them, like they could collapse at any moment. There was dust everywhere, and the sound of screams," he said.

Bajjou and the other villagers began to try to dig their neighbours out from under their homes. "We rescued several people who were buried under the rubble, we saved some but others were already dead, like my neighbour. Another lost both of their children, and his wife was injured."

Terrified and cold, the residents of the village remained outside for two days without water or electricity, too scared to return for fear of further aftershocks or crumbling buildings.

Samia Errazzouki, an expert in the history and governance of the Moroccan state at Stanford University in California, said: "Roads and access to this region are already difficult, before you compound that with difficulties like rubble or problems with the roads. It's going to take a miracle to get immediate aid there."

Members of Morocco's marginalised Amazigh community, known as Berbers, live among the villages in the earthquake zone. "These regions have historically been hit with earthquakes, but they have also been marginalised," Errazzouki said.



▲ *A man rescues a donkey trapped under rubble of a collapsed building*

Al-Haouz province, above the epicentre of the earthquake, recorded the most deaths, 1,293, followed by the province of Taroudant with 452.

People across Morocco described their terror at being unable to contact their loved ones in villages across the earthquake zone, where telephone networks have been patchy and in some cases continue to be unable to function after the earthquake.

"I was in Casablanca but even there we still felt the violent shaking," said Toufik, from Skoura, an oasis west of Marrakech. "I managed to contact my family by phone that night, but for a period after that it became impossible, the network wasn't functioning. I began to panic. Thankfully after several hours I managed to speak to them and everyone was OK."

While the country mourned, some questioned the speed of the emergency response. The king has long been quietly accused of governing from his residence in France. Despite returning to chair the emergency meeting, some said vital hours may have been lost due to a need for the palace's approval and control.

Residents of Marrakech, the major city nearest to the epicentre, said some buildings had collapsed in the old city, a Unesco world heritage site. Video showed the famous 12th-century Koutoubia mosque, which stands over the central Djemaa el-Fna marketplace, quaking with the force of the initial tremors, as people fled into the open area to seek safety.

The Red Cross said repairing the damage could take years. Unesco pledged to help repair damage to heritage sites in historic Marrakech, but the prospect of rebuilding in inaccessible remote towns and villages appeared even more challenging.

"It won't be a matter of a week or two … We are counting on a response that will take months, if not years," said Hossam Elsharkawi, the Red Cross director for the Middle East and north Africa.

Morocco has regularly experienced earthquakes along its northern coastline, notably a 6.3-magnitude quake near the town of Al Hoceima in 2004, which killed more than 600 people.

Additional reporting **Agencies**

Aftermath

Families bury their dead and await help

Continued from page 1

the rest of the building collapsed around them as a series of devastating shocks struck the village just after 11pm. It was, he conceded, a lucky escape.

"I felt the house shaking. We were covered in debris for a moment but it was only for a short time and then we managed to escape. Even then it wasn't easy. There was no electricity and the air was full of dust. You couldn't see. My heart was pounding like I was having a heart attack."

In the choking gloom, Imni and his family members clambered down a drop on to the talus of teetering rubble and fled to a nearby garden, where they spent the night.

The family and their neighbours in this village of 3,000 were still coming to terms with the death and destruction that was visited on them so suddenly. In the heart of this poor rural community, which sprawls down a steep mountain slope, there was almost no building left unscathed.

Some houses, like Imni's, had disintegrated. Others had been left standing but with upper storeys now bowing dangerously over the narrow stepped lanes, threatening to tumble under their own weight. But the worst impact was on human lives. Moulay Brahim's residents said about 25 people had died here, among more than 2,100 known so far to have been killed across the quake zone.

In the immediate aftermath of the disaster, villagers dug victims, both the living and the dead, out of the ruins with the most rudimentary of tools, giving first aid to the survivors until ambulances could reach the village. Landslides blocking the roads had to be cleared first.

"I was asleep when the earthquake struck," said Fatna Bechar. "I could not escape because the roof fell on me. I was trapped. I was saved by my neighbours, who cleared the rubble with their bare hands. Now, I am living with them in their house because mine was completely destroyed."

Others were not so lucky. On a main road at the upper end of the village, coffins bearing a mother and her daughter, two of four family members killed when their house collapsed, were being put into an ambulance yesterday to be taken to a nearby hospital.

As the bodies were being loaded, a group of weeping relatives surrounded the vehicle, crying out the names of the dead.

Standing nearby, Oumizane Lahoucine, aged 56, described the moment the earth shook and he ran to shelter in the street. "It lasted for six seconds," he recalled in a suit jacket and trousers smudged with dust. "It felt like we were being bombed." Behind his blue painted door, the stairs to the upper floor were choked with fallen masonry. The walls of every room were cracked. One side of his house had been pushed into the road outside.

A food distribution group and an international rescue team reached the village yesterday, but Morocco's military, whose helicopters could be seen from the village flying over the mountains, were yet to arrive, tasked for now to assist more remote and even more badly damaged villages still inaccessible by road. So the villagers of Moulay Brahim were largely helping themselves, digging their streets out from under the ruins, as figures emerged from doors carrying bundles of bedding and clothing to where they were sleeping in the open, shivering through the cool mountain nights.

And while the scenes on the road to Moulay Brahim appeared to offer a picture of random destruction, with some towns left almost unscathed while other villages were hit hard, there was a grim logic that explained why some buildings fell and others remained standing.

The 6.8-magnitude quake, which shook cities from Marrakech down to the coast, damaged most older houses made of clay brick and cinder blocks in poorer, rural communities, with newer concrete buildings surviving better.

But for those who survived the initial quake the pressing question now is when meaningful help will reach them and what it will involve.

Among those sleeping in the open was Moulay Ali Azouad, sitting with his family by the side of one of the village's main roads. While they had brought out mattresses and blankets from their damaged homes in the immediate aftermath of the catastrophe, they were scared to go back and fetch more and warmer clothes.

"The earthquake happened at about five past 11," said Azouad. "The ground began to shake. It was a small tremor at first and then 10 more shocks came really fast. We all ran straight from the house and have stayed outside ever since."

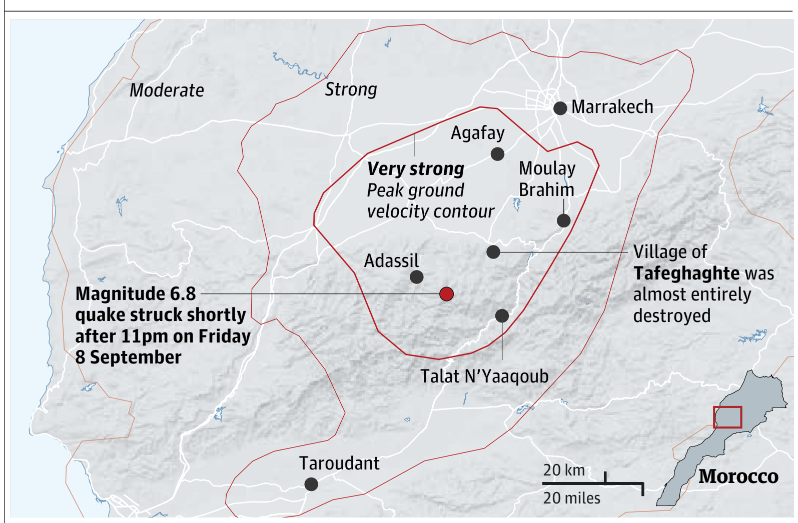
He pointed to a lay-by on the far side of the road. "The women sleep there, and the men sleep here on the pavement. The only help we have had so far is from Moroccan relatives living abroad who have sent money for food. But we need clothes and bedding and shelter because it is cold here at night."

Only now are villagers beginning to ask about the future and who will rebuild their ruined village. "We're waiting for the government to bring us the help we need and tell us what will happen," said Imni as he supervised a boulder being shifted from his lane. Until then the villagers of Moulay Brahim are left to fend for themselves.





▲ A daughter at her parent's funeral in Moulay Brahim yesterday. Left, people inspect damaged buildings in the village, where about 25 people died PHOTOGRAPHS: HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS



Source: USGS. Note: times are local

Rescue

Tunisia, Qatar and Spain send teams to help search

Angelique Chrisafis

Several countries have offered aid and search support after the Moroccan earthquake, but most of the rescue operation in remote mountain areas was being led by local teams and by last night Rabat had not issued a broad appeal for international aid.

After the earthquake hit on Friday night, officials asked certain countries for help. These included Tunisia, who sent 50 paramedics and personnel from a specialised unit, as well as search dogs, advanced thermal monitoring devices, a drone to detect victims under the rubble and a field hospital. Qatar also sent a rescue team and medical crews.

Spain's foreign minister, José Manuel Albares, said Madrid would also send search and rescue teams and aid, after a formal request from Morocco. "It is a sign of Spanish solidarity and of the sense of friendship that unites the people of Spain with the people of Morocco," Albares told Catalunya Radio. A Spanish military search and rescue team of 56 soldiers and four dogs flew to Marrakech.

Neighbouring Algeria, which has had difficult relations with Morocco, opened its airspace, which had been closed for two years, to flights carrying humanitarian aid.

Other countries said specialist search and rescue teams were ready if Morocco called on them, including Turkey, the US and Taiwan.

French authorities said they were ready to help Morocco but would wait for a formal request for assistance.

"Moroccan authorities know exactly what can be delivered, the nature [of what can be delivered] and the timing … We are at their disposal," President Emmanuel Macron said at the G20 summit in New Delhi. "We did everything we could do."

Sylvie Brunel, a geography professor who has worked for the NGO Action Against Hunger, told Le Figaro: "Rabat wants to show it is sovereign, capable of piloting its own search and rescue, and not behave as if it is a poor wounded country that the whole world wants to charitably save." She said that due to the remote mountain areas affected by the earthquake, the key emergency rescue work would depend on local Moroccan teams in the first 48 hours.



▲ Rescue workers carry the body of a woman found buried in Ouirgane

Brexiters upset after EU flags outnumber union jacks at Proms

Matthew Weaver

The sight of hundreds of EU flags at the Last Night of the Proms has prompted outrage from Brexiters and a call for the BBC to investigate.

Those waving the EU flag in the Royal Albert Hall on Saturday appeared to outnumber those waving the union flag at the event, which is usually a patriotic display, following a campaign by pro-Europeans.

The spectacle of so many EU flags being waved as the hall belted out Rule, Britannia! provoked disgust from leading Eurosceptics.

Harvey Proctor, a former Conservative MP, said it was a "disgraceful" display and called for an inquiry by the BBC, which organises and broadcasts the Proms.

In a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, he said: "BBC must investigate how so many EU flags were waved & on display at The Last Night of the Proms. Disgraceful & misguided BBC messing up a British tradition; a political gesture which would make Sir Henry Wood turn in his grave. Utterly vulgar & wrong. Rule Britannia, not Rule EU!"

Nile Gardiner, a former aide to Margaret Thatcher and a contributor to the Daily Telegraph, posted: "Ironic to see some of the audience at The Last Night of the Proms waving EU flags while singing Rule Britannia. Rule Britannia represents freedom, sovereignty, and self-determination, all absent in the European Union. Thank God for Brexit."



▶ *The BBC has been urged to investigate after EU flags were given to concertgoers outside the Royal Albert Hall in London*
PHOTOGRAPH: BBC



The spectacle was hailed as a success by a pro-European group of music lovers called Thank EU For The Music, who organised the display and said they had handed out thousands of EU flags outside the Royal Albert Hall. In a Facebook post, the group said the display sent a "powerful signal to the world that Britain wants back IN!" In an open letter to Tim Davie, the BBC's director general, the group said: "Tens of thousands of music lovers have taken our free European flags into the Royal Albert Hall for each Last Night of the Proms in solidarity with musicians who feel (like countless others) the destructive impact of Britain's recent isolation from Europe."

The group said it was keen to emphasis the "European and internationalist values of art and culture".

The letter added: "We appreciate that the BBC strives to avoid controversy at all costs, but would gently point out that in doing so you might on occasion have chosen reticence rather than objectivity with regards to editorial policy on Brexit matters.

"I'm sure it cannot have escaped your attention that the artistic endeavours on stage now happen despite, not because of, the limitations that Britain's departure from the European Union have imposed on the creative industries."

Saturday's Last Night of the Proms was the first full event since before the pandemic. Last year's event was cancelled following the death of Queen Elizabeth.

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▼ *Deal and Margate beaches in Kent and left, the Mirror pool in Bradford*
PHOTOGRAPHS: VICTORIA JONES AND GARETH FULLER /PA WIRE; GUZELIAN

Seven-day September heatwave breaks records as storms roll in

Mark Brown

The UK had an unprecedented seventh consecutive day of 30C heat yesterday, the Met Office said, but some areas were already experiencing the end of the heatwave with heavy, thundery rain, and warnings of more on the way.

Forecasters said there had never been a September heatwave on record as long-lived as this year's. Yesterday became the seventh consecutive day of 30C weather with the 32.5C recorded in Cambridge.

Before that, according to Met Office data, the UK has only had three consecutive days of 30C weather in September on four previous occasions: 1898, 1906, 1911 and 2016.

Tom Morgan, a Met Office meteorologist, had predicted another day of temperatures above 30C, and the highest temperatures were expected in the home counties.

"It's looking likely that we will see the seventh day of temperatures running at 30C or higher, which is unprecedented. We have never seen anything as long-lived in terms of a heatwave in September before," he said.

Saturday was named the hottest day of 2023 in the UK, with 32.7C recorded at Heathrow.

Many beaches were packed on Saturday and yesterday, while people enjoying boat trips in Cambridge used umbrellas to shelter from the sun.

Pets and animals struggled in the heat, however, and a number of weekend shows were cancelled, including DogFest at Knebworth House near Stevenage.Organisers announced the cancellation with "a heavy heart" but said "these conditions are not in the best interests of dogs".

Intense downpours followed the 2016 September heatwave and it is expected a similar weather pattern will follow this one. A yellow thunderstorm warning spanning Northern Ireland and northern parts of England and Wales, as well as southern and north-eastern Scotland, was issued for most of yesterday afternoon.

Many parts of those areas were expecting modest rainfall but pockets of intense downpours could mean 70mm of water falling in less than an hour, forecasters said.

The Met Office said flooding of homes and businesses could happen quickly, "with damage to some buildings from flood water, lightning strikes, hail or strong winds".

The conditions could make driving difficult, lead to train and bus disruption, cause power cuts or isolate some communities because of flooding.

On Tyneside the travel plans of Great North Run participants and spectators were hit by flash flooding, which led to the closure of South Shields Metro station and disruption across the network.The weather warning was in place until 11.59pm yesterday, but a separate yellow thunderstorm warning is in place for overnight until 6am today. That covers southern and central Scotland and includes the cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth.

A third weather warning was issued yesterday afternoon for severe thunderstorms and strong gusty winds across the east Midlands and northern East Anglia.

The Met Office said the likely speed of the transit of the thunderstorms meant rainfall would be limited.

"However, frequent lightning, large hail (up to 2cm in diameter), and wind gusts of 40-50mph are possible," the Met Office said. The warning was due to expire at 6pm.

Looking ahead there will be a few thunderstorms today, Morgan said. "But for the vast majority they will be a bit more scattered in nature than [yesterday]."



◀ *People walk past the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol as storms hit parts of the UK at the end of a record-breaking heatwave*
PHOTOGRAPH: BEN BIRCHALL/PA

Weather *Page 28* →

Kennedy: 'lefty lawyer' barbs echo authoritarian regimes

Haroon Siddique
Legal affairs correspondent

A leading British lawyer has compared UK government attacks on the profession to the tactics used by authoritarian regimes.

Helena Kennedy KC, one of the UK's most renowned criminal lawyers and a Labour peer, said ministers were deliberately creating scapegoats.

Speaking in her capacity as the president of council at the law reform and human rights charity Justice before publication of its report on threats to the rule of law, one of which it identifies as "disparagement of lawyers and judges", Lady Kennedy emphasised that its findings were non-political.

Kennedy said: "I run the institute of human rights for the International Bar Association and one of the things I am seeing all the time is our lawyers under attack under authoritarian regimes. The first thing that authoritarians do is they go after judges that make decisions that they don't like.

"They go after journalists, they go after any of their critics, whether it's [Alexei] Navalny [in Russia]) or it's in Turkey or in Iran, they go after lawyers and they end up jailing lawyers and undermining public confidence in lawyers. And so we should recognise that as one part of the story of how law is undermined and respect for law is undermined. It's about denying accountability."

Justice's report, published today, says there has been a "palpable trend" in the UK over the past five years of increasingly derogatory remarks such as "lefty lawyer" and "activist lawyer".

Kennedy said respect for the law was undermined by saying "oh, they're all lefty lawyers that represent people who are applying for asylum, or people who have immigration problems … They criticise lawyers who are legal aid lawyers for actually acting for those who couldn't afford litigation."

The report refers to concerns raised by some that the supreme court has fallen into step with the government in recent years and says that even if it is mere coincidence, it might give the perception that the UK's highest court "has been influenced by ministerial pressure".

The report says the government must safeguard judicial independence and the legal profession and reject the use of inflammatory language against them.

Kennedy said: "Many of the people who are lawyers on the Conservative benches are as concerned as people like me, so this is not confined to 'lefty lawyers'.

"This is something that is shared by decent lawyers, lawyers who believe in the rule of law."

A Ministry of Justice spokesperson said: "Everyone is entitled to representation whatever their case or their cause. We have always been clear that no lawyer should suffer harassment or abuse for doing their job."

‘Heartbreaking’: avian flu ravages seabird colonies across National Trust reserves

Mark Brown
North of England correspondent

Avian flu has devastated seabird colonies across England, Wales and Northern Ireland this year, the National Trust said, urging the government to coordinate detailed and long-term monitoring of the crisis.

It said more than 7,000 seabirds died of the disease at five of its sites in 2023. Only one of its sites was affected in 2022. “It is absolutely devastating for these birds,” said Ben McCarthy, its head of nature conservation and restoration ecology. “It is really tough for the rangers. It is upsetting to see so much death around you.

He said that on the Farne Islands in Northumberland “quite literally a herring gull fell out of the sky beside me”. “It is an extraordinary experience, really quite devastating, to see the scale of the mortality.” He said avian flu had added to the extreme pressure seabirds were already under because of the climate crisis.

Government action on the disease was necessary, he said, but it had to be part of a bigger picture.

“We do need the government to take bolder, stronger and more urgent action around the existential challenges of things like climate change and the nature crisis.”

“Very detailed and long-term monitoring” of avian flu needed to be coordinated by the government and its agencies, he said.

The government had got off to a “bit of a slow start”, he said. “But we are now getting in sync with each other … My concern is that the effort is sustained.”

McCarthy added that the trust had released bleak, “very depressing” figures for its sites.

At Long Nanny in Northumberland, home to Britain’s largest mainland colony of Arctic terns, James Porteus, an area ranger, said it was “absolutely heartbreaking” to see so many birds die.

Rangers began seeing signs of the disease in late June and have collected 1,066 dead Arctic tern chicks (about 40% of the population) and 263 adults (at least 8%). “This year’s losses could take years to recover from,” he said. “And that’s before we consider how this indiscriminate disease might impact the colony once again next year.”

At the Farne Islands there were fewer dead birds than last year (down 39%), which Harriet Reid, also an area ranger, said was partly down to regular pick-ups.



▼ *A kittiwake, one of the species of birds most affected by avian flu in the Farne Islands in Northumberland*
PHOTOGRAPH: ARTERRA PICTURE LIBRARY/ALAMY





▲ *National Trust rangers removing birds that have died of avian flu at the Farne Islands, one of Britain’s key nesting sites for puffins, left. The trust said 7,000 seabirds died of it at five of its sites*
PHOTOGRAPHS: NATIONAL TRUST; AM NATURE/ALAMY

“Removing the seabirds as soon as we find them does seem to have made a difference,” she said. “But we do need to rapidly understand what more we can do to protect these precious seabirds.”

Last year, guillemots and kittiwakes were most affected, she said. This year it is kittiwakes, large gulls and Arctic terns.

At Cemlyn in north Wales, more than 1,200 dead birds were collected, of which 711 were Sandwich terns and the majority, 77%, were chicks.

Chris Wynne, a senior reserves manager for the North Wales Wildlife Trust, said Cemlyn was one of the UK’s most important sites for Sandwich terns. “Last year our seabirds escaped bird flu, so it has been really distressing to see its impact here over the past few months,” he said.



Arctic terns have also been hard hit by avian flu

In South Wales, on the Pembrokeshire coast, hundreds of dead birds were washed up in July because of avian flu. At Brownsea Island in Dorset, 650 black-headed gulls, common terns and Sandwich terns died – most of them were chicks or juveniles.

In Northern Ireland, rangers collected 21 dead common terns from Cockle Island, a breeding colony just off the coast, and more birds washed up at Cushendun, White Park Bay and Runkerry over the summer.

A glimmer of good news comes from Blakeney Point on the north coast of Norfolk, home to an important breeding colony of little terns.

It appears to have escaped the disease with it being a ‘“good” year for a seabird that had previously been struggling due to foxes, rats and birds of prey, as well as disturbance from people and dogs, the trust said.

Sunak resists committing to pensions triple lock for next Tory manifesto

Kiran Stacey
Delhi

Rishi Sunak has refused to commit to keeping the pensions triple lock in the next Conservative manifesto, as he grapples with how to fund the tax cuts demanded by his own MPs.

The prime minister told reporters during the G20 summit in Delhi that the triple lock – which guarantees that state pensions will rise annually by 2.5%, or in line with inflation or average earnings if either one is higher – remains government policy.

But pushed on whether it would also be included in the next manifesto, he said: “We’re not going to speculate on the election manifesto now … But the triple lock is the government’s policy and has been for a long time.”

The policy was introduced by the coalition government in 2011, and has led to state pensions rising far quicker than wages. However, Sunak is also under pressure from his own MPs to find money for future tax cuts.

When asked this weekend about reports that his chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, is planning to cut benefits to fund tax cuts at next year’s budget, Sunak replied: “We’ve helped people with energy bills support directly this year; we provided direct cost of living payments. There’s lots of different ways to get support to the people who need it.”

Stephen Timms, the Labour chair of the work and pensions committee, said cutting benefits during a cost of living crisis “ought to be unthinkable”.

Pensioners will find out tomorrow how much their payments are set to increase. Data is expected to show that average earnings from May to July rose by about 8%.

An analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows pensioners are receiving nearly £100 a month more than they would have if pensions had gone up in line with either earnings or inflation, costing the government an extra £11bn a year. The report found that it will cost as much as £45bn a year extra by 2050.

Mel Stride, the pensions secretary, has previously said it would “almost certainly” continue to be Conservative policy going into the next election, but would not give an absolute guarantee.

Labour has also not said whether it will include the policy in its next manifesto, though a spokesperson for Keir Starmer has said the Labour leader remains committed it.

Any attempt to remove the guarantee is likely to meet with an angry response from older voters who helped the Tories win the last election. Two-thirds of voters aged 70 or above voted Conservative at the 2019 election, while only one in five people aged 18-24 did so.

Sara Sharif: father's relatives negotiate over fugitives' surrender in Pakistan

Haroon Janjua *Jhelum*
Emily Dugan

The family of Urfan Sharif, who is on the run in Pakistan with his wife and brother after his 10-year-old daughter, Sara, was found dead at their home in Surrey, are negotiating with local politicians for the fugitives to hand themselves in to the authorities.

It has been a month since Sharif arrived in Pakistan and called the UK emergency services to report that his daughter was dead at his home in Horsell, near Woking.

Sharif, 41, has been on the run since then, along with Sara's stepmother, Beinash Batool, 29, his five other children, aged between one and 13, and his brother, Faisal Malik, 28. A police official and Sharif's father, Muhammad Sharif, confirmed that negotiations had been taking place for the fugitives to come out of hiding and be handed over to the British authorities. They were said to be frightened of ill treatment if they were dealt with by police in Pakistan.

Muhammad Sharif, 68, said his son had sent him a voice note last week asking for advice and that he was persuading him to speak to the authorities.

"I got in contact with Urfan … the first time since his hiding," he said, speaking outside his home in Jhelum, Punjab province, where Urfan grew up. "He contacted me through voice message. I urged him to surrender as [our family] are unable to bear this



▲ *Sara Sharif, 10, was found dead at her home in Surrey last month*

pressure now. I asked him to defend the case in court of law and relieve us, and we cannot bear the police pressure and more arrests."

A police official close to the case said: "They are afraid of the police and we, with the help of influential and notable people, a few politicians, are persuading them to surrender and [assure them] they will not be harmed and will be presented before the court of the law."

A Pakistani legal expert said that if the three adults did come forward, their appearance was likely to be presented as an arrest by local police.

Ten of their relatives have been taken into custody for questioning and several of them have been held in secret locations for extended periods by police in Jhelum to put pressure on the fugitives to come forward. The relatives were not put into formal custody to avoid the intervention of the courts, methods that were last week branded as "unconstitutional colonial tactics".

Police are understood to have now made further threats to target the women in the family in order to try to increase the pressure.

Osama Malik, a criminal lawyer and expert in Pakistan's legal system, said: "In Pakistani villages and small towns, politics is still based on patronage and clan loyalties. Local politically influential clan members usually get involved in negotiations between police and fugitives, as is the case in this saga that has been running for a month."

Malik claimed the Pakistani police were "notoriously known for torture and even extrajudicial killings, known [locally] as encounters".

He added: "This reputation would likely make it difficult for Urfan and his family members to trust the police and surrender to them, which is where the local strongmen and influentials come in. They are likely giving Urfan the surety that police will treat them according to the law and they will be immediately handed over to British authorities."

"It's very likely that due to the pressure of detention of their innocent family members and the backdoor negotiations … Urfan will soon surrender to Pakistani authorities."

Mo bows out

A final lap of honour for a British sporting great

Mark Woods

'Go Mo, go" urged bright pink signs, waved enthusiastically on streets from Newcastle to South Shields. Cheers for each one of the 50,000 participants braving a savage heatwave in the cause of athletic ambition or fundraising freneticism.

But a special crescendo was reserved for Mo Farah above all, a collective ovation that escalated as the four-time Olympic gold medallist arrived at the end of the road, right arm aloft in salute, as he officially signed off his illustrious career with fourth place at the Great North Run.

At the age of 40, no valedictory seventh win at this famous half-marathon for the Briton had been expected. Last year's world marathon champion, Tamirat Tola of Ethiopia, took 59 minutes and 58 seconds to secure victory with Farah cast adrift from the leaders before the sixth mile was out.

It underlined the fallibility that even the greatest must eventually confront, the reason why the Somalia-born Londoner is certain now is the time to take his leave. "With the old Mo," he reflected, "nobody would be able to get that gap. I'm not a machine. Your body can't quite do it. I'm being honest in saying, 'If I can't be the best in the world, why are you doing it?' So it's been an amazing career. But it's really important that, at some point, you know when to call it a day."





▲ *Mo Farah acknowledging fans after completing his valedictory half marathon yesterday and left, runners in costume cross the Tyne Bridge*

PHOTOGRAPHS: OWEN HUMPHREYS/PA; IAN FORSYTH/GETTY

His greatest night was more than a decade ago, the zenith of Super Saturday at London 2012 when he, Jessica Ennis-Hill and Greg Rutherford each plundered gold within barely one hour. "I look back and think, 'Wow how did we do that?' he reflected.

There were further Olympian heights scaled in Rio four years later. Yet Farah has been on a lap of honour for some time now, ever since his doomed attempt to qualify for the delayed Tokyo Games of 2021. He was short of the required standard. Sport, inevitably, marches on.

Relentless training runs in the valleys of Kenya and the mountains of southern France have turned into rolls of the dice. Good health, injuries, a bruising cycle on repeat. Still good enough to compete, even occasionally to prevail. Enough value in the Farah brand to handsomely supplement his pension fund, stardust added to events like the London Marathon and this Great North Run.

No British athlete has come close to his roll of honour, with 17 major titles on the track and national records stretching from 1,500 metres up to the marathon. An astonishing range. And yet inquisition has accompanied acclaim. Through his peak, he was coached by the American Alberto Salazar who was eventually banned from the sport for doping offences.

Farah came through rigorous testing with a spotless record. Innocence asserted, he has asked us to take him at his word. What does he hope his legacy might be? "Just someone who's always committed, who gave it 110%. And someone who can overcome many struggles."

The public, judging by his warm reception on Tyneside, have not let the fog cloud their affection. "He's just inspirational," said Maxine, from Gateshead. "We wanted to be here because this was his moment," added Sian, from Darlington. "To be part of Mo's last race was pretty special," underlined Farah's training partner Andy Butchart.

"Guys like Mo don't come around very often," declared the Great North Run founder, Brendan Foster. His annual showpiece will retain star power. Kenya's Peres Jepchirchir won the women's race in 66min 45sec. In her wake followed Bill Cooksey, a 102-year-old gently circumnavigating the course to raise money for Durham's NHS. Or blind runner Keith Turner, following the sound of a bell to set a world record for completing this distance untethered. Heroes, just of a different ilk.

What next for Farah? No Mo' running, he insisted. No Saturday mornings at the local Parkrun near his south London home. Just a planned treat tea of a calorific curry and then the school run on Monday morning. "It's going to be very difficult," he concluded. "Because I'm one of these athletes where I've got to keep on moving." He jogged off to more bows and more selfies as the signs that spurred him to the end became souvenirs of an era complete.

Sport Sean Ingle Page 29 →

TV review
Neighbours revamp serves up nostalgia with twists

Neighbours
Amazon Freevee
★★★☆☆

Frances Ryan

Watching as the familiar theme tune plays over the opening credits of the Neighbours reboot, it feels like seeing a distant relative come back from the dead. Sure, you are pleased to see them, but it's all a bit disconcerting.

When the soap ended after 37 years last summer, it was given the sort of sendoff most programmes could only dream of. Neighbours was not only given the chance to tie up every loose end, its long history was celebrated too. Kylie and Jason returned! Margot Robbie turned up! Guy Pearce declared his love for Plain Jane Superbrain!

Then Amazon stepped in to save the show, several months after the "last ever episode" aired. If the reboot is a loved one coming back to life, viewers could be forgiven for wondering why they bothered to sit through a six-month wake.

When every character has been given the perfect goodbye, what do producers do now? Do you return to Ramsay Street, carry on as normal and pretend nothing happened? Or do you try something fresh and throw a grenade in? Based on the first eight episodes that have been made available to the press, the Neighbours execs appear to have gone with: "Let's try a bit of both."

Familiar faces such as Susan and Karl Kennedy (Jackie Woodburne and Alan Fletcher), Paul Robinson (Stefan Dennis), Toadie (Ryan Moloney) and Jane Harris (Annie Jones) return, but they are joined by a number of newcomers including The OC's Mischa Barton for reasons no one quite understands.

Set two years after the finale, the producers niftily avoid awkward explanations by moving the timescale on significantly. Children have been recast and seemingly aged a decade. Former cast members are referred to as if they have gone into witness protection. Long-running characters utter cryptic phrases suggesting "a lot has happened in two years".

The first episode includes the sort of twist that will leave fans shouting at their screens. It is an odd mix of nostalgia (the old sets and famous cul-de-sac remain) and unsettling change. There are moments so surreal you half expect to see Paul Robinson in the shower bemoaning his wife's bad dream.

Perhaps the most publicised problem for the writers is how to deal with the fact the finale saw Pearce's Mike decide to buy a house on Ramsay Street to live out his days with Jane. That Mike spends much of the first episode on FaceTime suggests Pearce is not planning to leave Hollywood for soap life. Still, you have to credit him for bothering to return (again).

When Channel 5 axed the series it was pulling in about 800,000 viewers a day, while 3 million tuned in for the finale. Whether these fans will come back now is another matter. With a host of new, unknown actors in place of half the old cast it feels like Neighbours on a budget.

And yet it would take a harsher cynic than me not to feel glad to see the residents of Ramsay Street again. By the time Susan and Karl are having yet another marital bust-up and a newcomer asks "Shall I fire up the barbie?", you can almost convince yourself that they have never been away.

From 18 September

▼ New faces such as Mischa Barton, centre, join returnees including Alan Fletcher, left, and Jackie Woodburne
PHOTOGRAPH: JANE ZHANG/AMAZON FREEVEE





▲ The finale had Guy Pearce's Mike reunite with Jane (Annie Jones)

Pensioner poverty looms for under-40s as wealth falls

Hilary Osborne

Campaigners have sounded the alarm about a potential increase in pensioner poverty in Britain over the coming decades after it emerged that the share of wealth held by people under 40 has fallen sharply amid a growing intergenerational divide.

Data from the International Longevity Centre (ILC) thinktank shows that in 2010-11, under-40s made up just over half of the population and held £7.53 of every £100 in wealth. While that figure was low, a decade later it had plummeted to £3.98.

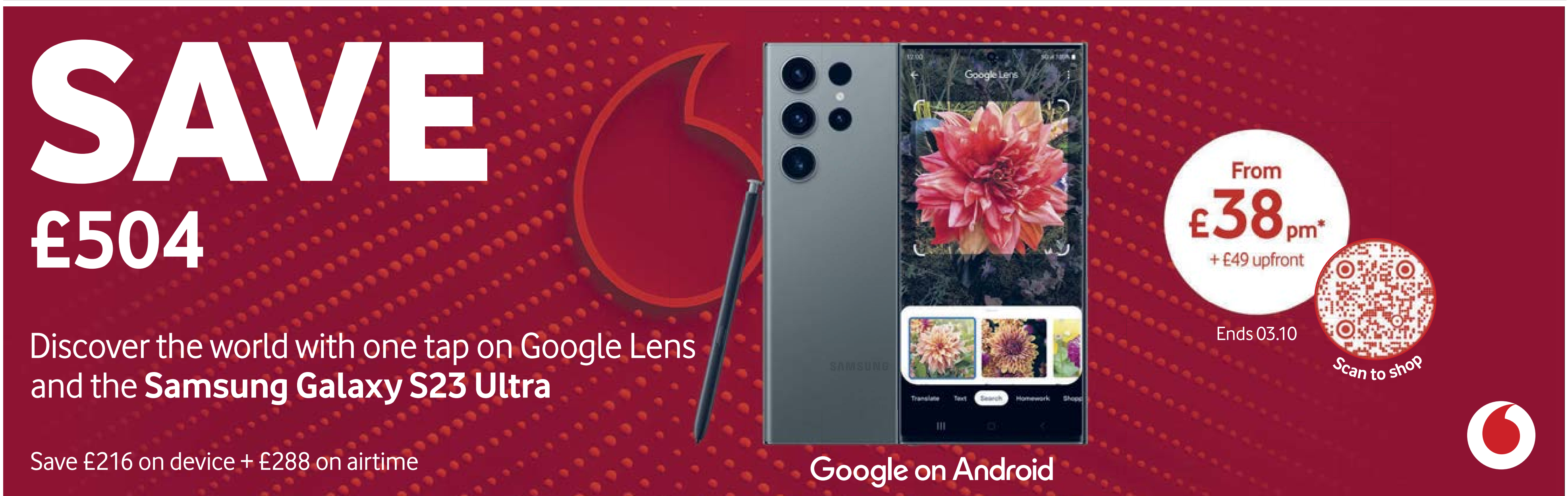
Last week a study by the financial advice firm Hargreaves Lansdown found almost a third of 18- to 34-year-olds had stopped or cut back on their pension contributions to save money.

The ILC data is based on analysis of figures from the Office for National Statistics, and the wealth being measured includes the value of property, private pensions, savings and investments.

Property ownership is the key driver for the gap, with under-40s more likely to be renting for longer.

The mean net property wealth in this group fell from £13,967 in 2010 to £11,450 in 2019, while in the older groups there were large rises. The older groups also recorded sizable increases in pension wealth.

David Sinclair, chief executive of the ILC UK, said: "Younger people are already not saving enough to enjoy a decent lifestyle as they age, and our latest analysis shows younger generations will have even fewer assets available. Pensioner poverty is already a significant issue, and it will grow if we don't act now. We know that future retirees won't be able to rely on housing wealth."



Device Plan	Device	Duration of Credit Agreement	Monthly	Credit Amount	Upfront Cost	Total / Cash Price	Representative APR	Airtime Plan 8GB + 2 Xtra Benefits	Duration	Monthly
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> *'I am proud now that I have my job with the NHS. I love it here. They call me the magic man'*
>
> **Sediq Shamal**
> *Former medic in Afghanistan*

▲ *Sediq Shamal, pictured in Rhyl, used a local job support scheme to guide him through the process of starting a new life in Wales*
PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRISTOPHER THOMOND/GUARDIAN

'Just any job won't do' How targeted local help is getting people into work in Wales

Heather Stewart

Sediq Shamal saw more than his fair share of blood when he worked as a medic with British special forces in Afghanistan. Now resettled in north Wales, he's putting skills honed on the battlefield to use in the health service.

"I have experience: I managed before 10 casualties, five casualties, explosions. I am proud now that I have my job with the NHS."

The 27-year-old is working in a clinic, taking blood. When his colleagues are unable to coax a patient to have a sample taken, they bring them to him. "They call me magic man."

He is chatting to the shadow employment minister, Alison McGovern, here in Rhyl to meet the clients of a local job support scheme, Working Denbighshire. "I love it here," he tells her.

Helping Shamal to tell his story is Carys Drennan, the mentor who has guided him through the process of starting a new life - and finding a job - in a new country.

McGovern is in this Welsh seaside town to highlight the benefits of job support tailored to local areas.

"I've been trying to get the idea [better] understood that part of the big problem in the economy is the way we're using people's time and talents - we're letting too many people's time go to waste," she says.

"It's also that our economic and our social problems are intertwined, particularly in a place like this, where you've got work in the hospitality sector, which has traditionally been badly paid and not necessarily given people the opportunities to progress."

With jobcentres increasingly focused on implementing the heavily conditional benefits regime, she says they fail to reach many people who may need help to navigate the labour market.

Here in Rhyl, the council has taken funding from Westminster and Cardiff, as well as a grant from the Shared Prosperity Fund, and brought it together under a single brand - Working Denbighshire.

It runs one-to-one mentoring, aimed at tackling each individual's barriers to work, which can range from crippling social anxiety to the lack of an interview suit, an up-to-date CV or a birth certificate.

"The people we support have entrenched challenges," says Working Denbighshire's Mel Evans. "They're from jobless households of many generations; they have lots of things that they need to overcome before you can put them into work."

McGovern agrees, criticising the Department for Work and Pensions' "ABC" approach - "Any job first, a Better job next and into a Career" - based on the idea the initial role of jobcentres should be to nudge benefits claimants into any role.

"Just any job won't work: it's got to be the right job, the right journey at the right speed," she says.

Key to Labour's approach would be devolving responsibility for employment support to local level.

"Forced uniformity everywhere doesn't respond to the differences in local labour markets well. There's a different range of jobs in Rhyl and Prestatyn than there is in Oldham," McGovern says.

Under a Labour government, she would like to see schemes like this across the UK - adapted to local circumstances.

"There's a different range of jobs, there are different people, a different social history. If you localise things, that's a better way of supporting the whole UK economy," she said.



▲ *Labour's Alison McGovern visits the Working Denbighshire scheme*

TUC reports 'undemocratic' anti-strike law to UN body

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) has lodged a complaint with the UN's labour standards body claiming the UK government flouted the watchdog's orders over its new anti-strike law.

Paul Nowak, the TUC's general secretary, said it had taken its case to the International Labour Organization (ILO) because the strike act was "almost certainly" in breach of international law.

The bill requires staff to ensure minimum service levels during strikes by key sectors including emergency services and rail.

The ILO issued what the TUC described as an "embarrassing" reprimand to the government over the anti-strike law in June, a month before its formal introduction, following a complaint by the TUC. It told the UK to ensure any existing or incoming laws conformed with international rules.

Before the TUC's annual meeting in Liverpool yesterday, Nowak said the strike laws fell "well short" of ILO standards and the TUC had submitted a case to the ILO.

The government introduced the laws after a year of the biggest wave of industrial action seen in Britain in three decades.

A government spokesperson said the legislation's purpose was "to protect the lives and livelihoods of the general public and ensure they can continue to access vital public services during strikes". "[It] does not remove the ability to strike," they added. Kalyeena Makortoff

Starmer to highlight Labour's policies on asylum seekers

Peter Walker
Deputy political editor

Keir Starmer plans to highlight Labour's policies to combat small boat crossings by asylum seekers, as the party seeks to address the perceived Conservative advantage on immigration issues, it has emerged.

The Labour leader will meet officials from Europol, the EU's cross-border law enforcement organisation, in The Hague on Wednesday to discuss his party's proposals - first reported by the Sunday Times - to limit the number of people unofficially crossing the Channel to the UK.

On Friday, Starmer will travel to Montreal for a conference of centre-left politicians to call for wider cooperation on people trafficking and to argue that the issue of migration cannot be thought of as one purely for rightwing parties.

Within the Labour party, Rishi Sunak's government is perceived as vulnerable over the issue of small boats as its policies have failed to reduce the number of crossings.

Labour opposes the Sunak policy of deporting asylum seekers to Rwanda. It aims to use improved policing and cooperation with other countries as a means to reduce the number of refugees crossing the Channel as well to set up some official asylum routes.

Money used for the Rwanda scheme would be redirected to the National Crime Agency to fund a specialist unit focusing on cross-border people-smuggling, with officers seconded to work with border officials in other countries.

Labour also plans to pay for more asylum caseworkers to try to clear the backlog of more than 175,000 asylum seekers who are awaiting an initial decision on their application.

According to the Sunday Times, while Starmer's speech to the Labour conference in Liverpool in October will be based on hope for the country, the party also wants to set out a message of "reassurance" over its efforts to reduce the number of Channel crossings.

The paper said Starmer and his strategists believed that Sunak's inability to curb unofficial arrivals, despite this being one of his five main policy pledges, gave an opening to Labour.

A senior Labour source told the Sunday Times: "In the election, we think this is an argument we can win. We have never seen immigration as a distraction. It's a real issue that voters are rightfully concerned about. We have never subscribed to this notion that it's not progressive to want strong borders."

Ministers launch plan to cut rates of suicide and self-harm

Andrew Gregory
Health editor

Ministers have vowed to reduce suicide rates in England with the launch of more than 100 initiatives, amid particular concerns over rising deaths and self-harm among young people.

Their pledge to reverse the trends within two-and-a-half years came as the government launched its first prevention strategy in more than a decade. In 2022, there were 5,275 suicides in England, equivalent to 10.6 suicides per 100,000 people, according to official figures.

"While overall, the current suicide rate is not significantly higher than in 2012, the rate is not falling," the document published today says. "We must do all we can to prevent more suicides, save many more lives and ultimately reduce suicide rates."

It highlighted how rates of suicide among children and young people had increased in recent years, despite being low overall, adding: "Urgent attention is needed to address and reverse these trends."

The new measures being launched will also aid other specific groups at higher risk of suicide, including middle-aged men, autistic people, pregnant women and new mothers.

Steve Barclay, the health secretary, said: "Too many people are still affected by the tragedy of suicide, which is so often preventable. This national cross-government strategy details over 100 actions we'll take to ensure anyone experiencing the turmoil of a crisis has access to the urgent support they need."

A national alert system to highlight new methods of suicide could also help to bring down suicide rates in England, according to the strategy.

Other initiatives outlined in the document include plans for medical experts to review whether reducing the number of paracetamol people can buy could help bring down suicide rates, and the Department for Education examining whether suicide and self-harm prevention should be part of the school curriculum.

Mental health groups cautiously welcomed the strategy, but said funding would be key to success.



When you buy a single pair of glasses from our £69 range or above. Cannot be combined/used with any other offers. Additional charge – Extra Options. Subject to suitability. Excludes Rimless.



▲ *Rory Stewart said that during his nine years in the Commons he 'ended up despising' himself for trying to advance his career* PHOTOGRAPH: PA IMAGES/ALAMY

Some MPs came close to killing themselves over pressure – Stewart

Peter Walker
Deputy political editor

The former Conservative minister Rory Stewart has said some MPs came close to killing themselves when he was in the Commons and the life of a politician placed an "almost unsustainable" strain on people.

Stewart, who was international development secretary and stood to be leader of the Conservative party before leaving the Commons in 2019, said other former colleagues experienced "total breakdowns in public".

Speaking to GB News before the publication of a new memoir, Stewart said: "I don't want to talk about the specifics because this is deeply personal to people but, yes, colleagues tried to kill themselves.

"These are people I knew. And in very serious ways – I mean they almost killed themselves. It's a miracle they aren't dead. There were other colleagues who had total breakdowns in the most humiliating, personal, embarrassing fashion possible."

Stewart said the nature of a politician's job often had an impact on their mental health. "I think it is because the gap between the way that MPs are encouraged to present themselves to the public and who they really are is almost unsustainable," he said.

"It's mad, because you're pretending to be all-knowing, perfect, dynamic, confident … The truth is, this is a country of 70 million people, and politicians don't really know what's going on. And yet we pretend to the public that we do."

Stewart said that as his nine-year stint in the Commons went on, he "ended up despising" himself for trying to advance his career. "I would find myself sort of creepily trying to sit next to David Cameron at lunch, and I'd send these texts saying, you know, 'congratulations on your latest policy' that I didn't really believe in.

"And so I began to feel that I was being made, in my early 40s, into some kind of child. I'd been the acting governor of an Iraqi province responsible for 3 million people, and a Harvard professor, and I'd run a charity in Afghanistan.

"I thought that I was a reasonably substantial person. And I realised that, as soon as I became an MP, all that was wiped out. Nobody takes you seriously."

> *'There were other colleagues who had total breakdowns'*
>
> **Rory Stewart**
> *Former minister*

In the UK and Ireland, Samaritans can be contacted on freephone 116 123, or email jo@samaritans.org or jo@samaritans.ie

Review Hopkins is back on his A-game portraying Winton's wartime bravery

One Life
Toronto film festival
★★★☆☆

Benjamin Lee



It seems strange that an actor of Anthony Hopkins' prestige and acclaim would need a comeback so late in his career but for a few years, the Oscar-winner was stuck in a cycle of thankless sequel paychecks and one-word thrillers where the "and" credit was starting to lose its lustre (Collide! Solace! Misconduct! Blackway!).

Then in 2020 he was Oscar-nominated for The Two Popes (his first Academy attention since 1998) and won best actor the following year for The Father. While it didn't exactly curb his predilection for B-movies completely (in 2021 he starred in Zero Contact, the first film to be released by an NFT platform), it did edge him back towards substance, with a subtle yet scene-devouring turn in James Gray's Armageddon Time and now, another knockout performance in second world war drama One Life.

The film might, at times, feel more like a BBC TV drama (it does come from BBC Film among others) with some pedestrian filmmaking touches, but it builds towards a last act of towering emotion, with few dry eyes at its Toronto film festival premiere. It's a true story of the radical bravery of Nicholas Winton, a stockbroker gripped by a need to do something as Europe neared the start of the second world war. He headed to Prague in 1938, despite the cautions of his well-intentioned mother, and found himself immediately horrified by the situation so many of the young, Jewish refugees were in, with most unlikely to survive the winter. His plan to save them was dismissed as naive by those more hardened by what they had seen and what they had found not to be possible but he returned to London determined to help and with the assistance of his equally dogged mother, he started gathering visas and finding homes.

> ***There were few dry eyes at the film's festival premiere***

We see his work play out via flashbacks as the older Winton sorts through files and papers he has long been hoarding, much to the chagrin of his wife. Played by Johnny Flynn as a youth, he's a man driven by an unstoppable need to help and as his older self, played by Hopkins, he's a man haunted by never helping enough. Embarrassed by the idea of demanding attention for what he'd done, he learned to almost bury it, telling himself that anyone would have acted in the same way and that thinking too much about it would cause him to focus on those who were left behind.

▲ *Helena Bonham Carter plays the tenacious Babi Winton and below, Hopkins as the hero Nicholas Winton*
PHOTOGRAPH: ENTERTAINMENT PICTURES/ALAMY



It's an involving back-and-forth through time but in the scenes from the late 1930s, the small-screen director James Hawes often struggles to visually distinguish his film from so many second world war dramas that have come before, reverting to the safety of his TV roots. Flynn is a convincingly obsessive problem-solver, with help from a steely Romola Garai in Prague and a tenacious Helena Bonham Carter as his mother in London, and there's an undeniable wrench from the familiar yet poignant images of little hands waving goodbye to parents they're never going to see again.

But it's in the scenes from the late 1980s, which slowly start to take centre stage, that the film finds more original footing, exploring with nuance the realities of living with the weight of doing so much yet thinking of it as so little.

Winton's monumental accomplishment was kept hidden for years, buried in a leather briefcase in his home, and as he slowly tries to find a way to share the documents that detail what he did (for historical and educational purposes rather than for anything involving his ego), his life and self-perception start to shift. It's in these latter scenes, as he confronts his innate goodness and realises the weight of what he's done, that the film truly soars.

Key moments take place at recordings of the BBC's That's Life!, a show his wife laughs off as tacky, but there's something about its unashamed sentimentality that starts to have an effect, suddenly hitting us as it does Hopkins, whose display of unearthed emotion is rather shattering, a man never thinking of himself as good enough finally realising he's better than most of us. It's a last act that brought down the house here in Toronto and will likely do the same upon release.

Released in the UK on 5 January

Review Joyless period farce is a wicked waste of talent

Wicked Little Letters
Toronto film festival
★☆☆☆☆

Benjamin Lee

There's something equally impressive and depressing about the squandered potential of this misfiring period comedy, a joyless waste of cast, premise and setting which has landed with an almighty thud at this year's Toronto film festival. A once-promising reunion for The Lost Daughter co-stars Olivia Colman and Jessie Buckley, it instead represents a regretful low point for them both and for this year's festival thus far, the only little letter it deserves being an F.

There are plenty of F-words being thrown about in the film, arguably too many, most jokes relying on our shock at hearing prim characters use foul language. Based on a real-life scandal, it tells the story of a neighbourly feud in 1920s West Sussex between Colman's religious puritan Edith and Buckley's rule-defying wild child Rose. They were once close friends but a falling out has pitted them against each other, with Edith receiving a string of obscene letters and Rose the number one suspect.

The stage is set for a deliciously nasty battle between the pair but long-time theatre director Thea Sharrock has instead set her stage for an am-dram pantomime with every moment dialled up to an unbearable 11, talented actors somehow giving their very worst. It's an uncharacteristically underwhelming turn from Colman, who reverts to wide-eyed sitcom overemphasis for her pious do-gooder, a big step back for an actor who had been on a roll (I remain one of the few vehement Empire of Light defenders, her performance as a lonely cinema worker finding a connection proving to be one of her most indelible). While Buckley fares somewhat better, playing things with more grit, it's a thin riff on her rowdy single mum from Wild Rose, a career-best performance that leaves this in the shade. A talented supporting cast also find themselves underserved with a cartoonishly bad Timothy Spall going full ham and usually reliable actors such as Joanna Scanlan, Gemma Jones and Eileen Atkins all desperately trying to eke laughs from unfunny zingers.



▲ *Wicked Little Letters is a low point for Jessie Buckley and Olivia Colman*

The comedian Jonny Sweet's tiresome script takes a juicy setup and squeezes out anything that could have been fun, leaving a laboured farce with an over-reliance on characters saying fuck and cock ad nauseam. It's reminiscent of last year's creaky West End whodunnit See How They Run with actors almost waiting for laughter that isn't deserved. That film at least had a plot worth unravelling but the mystery here of who is behind the letters will be a mystery to no one, and once revealed, it feels like a real slog to the finish line, a sudden switch to pathos as unearned as it is unsuccessful. With clumsy nods at the suffragette movement and characters expressing thoughts on what a woman should or shouldn't say or do, Sweet makes a vague attempt to say something about the misogyny of the time but other than pointing a wagging a finger, he doesn't bother delving any deeper.

It's all rather baffling, given the talent involved, a riotously good time promised on paper turned into something oddly miserable on screen. How wicked.

Released in the UK on 23 February

Call to use 'road belt, not green belt', for new homes

Robert Booth
Social affairs correspondent

Needlessly wide roads should be torn up and replaced with boulevards of new housing, a thinktank led by the UK government's most senior urbanism adviser has proposed, in a move likely to delight green belt campaigners but rile the motoring lobby.

Create Streets wants sweeping T-junctions tightened, vast roundabouts "tamed" and expressways narrowed, according to a paper to be circulated to ministers and seen by the Guardian. Amid a housing crisis that is increasing pressure to erect homes in the countryside, it says: "Forget green belt. This is Britain's road belt and it's time to build on it."

Early stage design projects to test the approach are under way in Rochdale, Bedford and Southend-on-Sea.

The idea comes as motoring and housing rise up the political agenda. Amid signs of a culture war, Rishi Sunak has told motorists he is "on their side" and launched a review of low-traffic neighbourhoods. He tried unsuccessfully to overrule Sadiq Khan's extension of London's £12.50 a day ultra-low emission zone. Both initiatives have become lightning rods for wider political debates about personal freedom, inequality and, in some cases, conspiracy theories about shadowy forces attempting to control the population.

Meanwhile, the government is 125,000 below its target of building 300,000 homes a year by the middle of this decade, based on official figures for England, and its latest planning policy requires "suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land" to be used before the green belt.

Create Streets was founded by Nicholas Boys Smith, who leads the government's "building beautifully" agency, the Office for Place. It has influenced Tory planning policies and counts one of King Charles's leading urbanism advisers, Ben Bolgar, among its collaborators.

Its proposal states: "We could create proud boulevards lined with beautiful homes on space currently given over to needlessly, counter-productively wide roads."



Baby driver The model and actor Twiggy, right, congratulates the young winner of the men's best dressed competition during the Goodwood Revival in West Sussex.

PHOTOGRAPH: KIERAN CLEEVES/PA

Wait for heart devices to be implanted is risking lives, experts warn

Andrew Gregory
Health editor

Patients are needlessly being put at risk of dying from heart problems because they have to wait months to be fitted with lifesaving implantable defibrillators, experts have warned.

More than 2 million people in the UK live with coronary heart disease, which is a leading cause of heart failure. Those at the highest risk of dying due to heart failure may be offered an implantable cardioverter defibrillator device (ICD), which can kickstart the heart and may save their life.

Patients currently have to wait at least 90 days before they can be fitted with an ICD while doctors wait to see if stents and medication might improve their health. However, a large study funded by the British Heart Foundation suggests there is little or no benefit to waiting and that lives are being put at risk as a result.

Dr Sonya Babu-Narayan, an associate medical director at the BHF, told the Guardian the results had significant implications. "The findings suggest that the current 'wait and see' approach to find out whether a patient's heart function improves with medication and stents isn't always best, and that an unnecessary wait could even be the difference between life and death," she said.

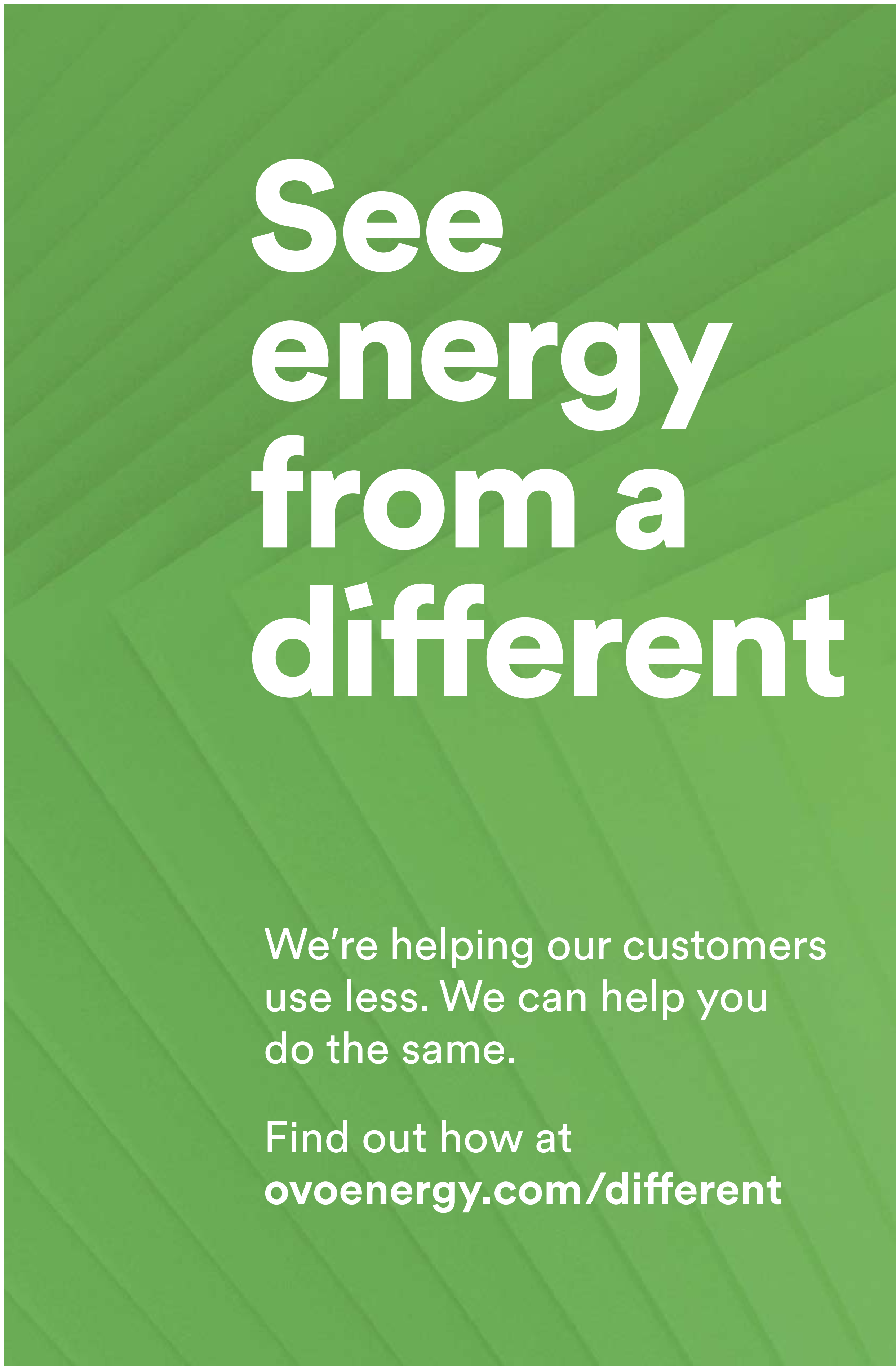
The team behind the research, led by Prof Divaka Perera at King's College London, believe it may lead to changes in heart failure guidelines worldwide.

ICDs are placed under the skin, usually just below the collarbone. Thin wires connect them to the heart, where they monitor its rate and rhythm. If an ICD notices a dangerous heart rhythm it can deliver a series of low-voltage electrical impulses to try to correct it.

Researchers recruited 700 patients from 40 hospitals in the UK who had coronary heart disease and severely weakened function of the left ventricle. Half were randomly assigned to have stents. Everyone was followed for up to eight years.

The study found stents did not reliably improve the heart's ability to pump, nor did they reduce the risk of life-threatening heart rhythm disturbances, or the number of cardiac arrests and deaths. However, the team stressed that they remain an effective treatment for heart attack patients or people with angina.

Dr Holly Morgan, a BHF clinical research fellow involved in the research, said: "We have exposed a clear window of missed opportunity to reduce chances of dying from an abnormal heart rhythm. We hope our findings will influence existing guidance, so patients can be spared unnecessary waits to receive a potentially life-saving defibrillator."



Boys Smith said: "It is no secret that the most productive and prosperous cities, including London … don't exclusively rely on cars to get around. It is time not to widen our road belt but to build upon it."

Steve Gooding, the director of the pro-motoring thinktank the RAC Foundation, said narrowing roads would require planners to decide which traffic they no longer wanted.

"Grand visions need to be backed up by meticulous planning and adequate funding if they are to be turned into a livable reality where our shops are well stocked, our kids can get to school, and our home deliveries arrive when we expect them," he said.

He conceded that increasing the number of 20mph zones meant sweeping junctions and large roundabouts designed decades ago for higher speeds could be revisited, but said: "It remains to be seen whether linking that with housing development unlocks the scale of investment that's currently beyond the reach of our cash-strapped local councils."

David Milner, the deputy director of Create Streets, who wrote the policy paper, said: "Working together, there is no reason these redundant spaces can't be turned into beautiful streets and beautiful homes."

Rochdale is exploring removing a turning lane from a four-lane highway, allowing designers to create a corner block, and adding 400 homes.

400

Number of new homes that may be created in Rochdale by removing a turning lane from a highway



Yousaf's lack of action on poverty a 'kick in the teeth', say Scottish carers

Libby Brooks
Scotland correspondent

People who shared personal stories with Humza Yousaf about living in poverty have said the lack of concrete action in his first programme for government last week felt like "a kick in the teeth".

Yousaf had convened a cross-party, cross-sector summit on tackling poverty in May as one of his first acts as SNP leader.

Linda Craik, who was invited to share her experience as a full-time carer at the event, said: "I left my dignity at the door when I went to that summit and shared my very personal experience with [Yousaf]. Now I wonder, was he even listening?"

The first minister said the programme for government, the Holyrood equivalent of the king's speech, was "unashamedly anti-poverty" – it set out expanded childcare provision, minimum income guarantees for social and childcare workers, plus further investment in the Scottish child payment, and a pledge to "build a new relationship with business".

But the programme has been variously described as timid, hollow and a missed opportunity by charities and campaign groups.

Craik, who was a civil servant before becoming an unpaid carer for her severely disabled brother and then her father, accused Yousaf of "paying lip service", saying his programme was made up of piecemeal interventions, with existing plans repackaged and pilot schemes that would take 12 months to report back.

She said: "Does he have any idea how bleak things will look in a year? When you read the programme for government it does feel like a kick in the teeth."

Responding to similar criticism, Yousaf cited "the confines of devolution" on his budget. The Scottish government is facing a forecast spending gap of £1bn amid surging inflation and rising public-sector wage bills, putting huge pressure on Holyrood's budget and limiting scope for expensive new policies.

Danielle Ramage, who was also at the summit, said: "I asked the first minister to be brave, and this programme for government is not brave enough … People living in poverty have to be brave every day, just to get up and hold their heads high."

Ramage, who works with families in Kinross-shire for the local group Broke Not Broken, added: "I do believe he wants equality at the heart of everything, he was making the right noises. But there wasn't the substance there."

She urged ministers to consider "parent poverty", and the toll on "exhausted" adults.

Disappointment was also expressed by third-sector leaders, who had previously called on Yousaf to bridge the gap between progressive rhetoric and the reality of policy implementation that they say characterised the Nicola Sturgeon era.

David Reilly, acting director of the Poverty Alliance, said: "The actions don't yet match the ambition of government's rhetoric." He said ministers were not on track to meet their own statutory child poverty targets, which included bringing child poverty levels below 10% by 2030.

Charities were especially concerned about plans for housing. Alison Watson, director of Shelter Scotland, said no new resources for tackling homelessness had been offered. John Dickie, director of the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland, challenged Yousaf to consider raising taxes. "In a country as wealthy as Scotland there can be no excuse for failure to meet child poverty targets."



▲ *Linda Craik, a carer in Edinburgh, shared her experiences with Yousaf but now wonders if he was 'even listening'* PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MACLEOD/THE GUARDIAN

World

Lavrov claims a win at G20 after Russia is shielded from criticism over war in Ukraine

Hannah Ellis-Petersen
Delhi

Russia's foreign minister has hailed the G20 summit in Delhi as a success after Moscow was shielded from criticism over the Ukraine war in a joint declaration.

"We were able to prevent the west's attempts to Ukrainise the summit agenda," Sergei Lavrov said, speaking as the two-day meeting of the G20 leaders drew to a close.

India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, had boasted of a diplomatic triumph this weekend after all 20 member countries, including China, reached a consensus after tough negotiations and signed a joint declaration on issues covering the climate, economic cooperation and, most divisively, the war in Ukraine.

However, the language on the invasion of Ukraine was noticeably softened - seemingly to appease China and Russia - omitting any condemnation of Russia or reference to Russia's aggressions that had been included in last year's G20 joint statement signed in Bali. The new wording provoked criticism from Ukraine, which called the joint statement "nothing to be proud of".

Lavrov claimed it was a diplomatic win for Russia, stating that the declaration "fully reflects our position".

The foreign minister said he had not expected western countries to agree to the statement, after the Russian and Chinese delegations had made it clear they no longer accepted the wording used to condemn the invasion of Ukraine last year.

"Perhaps it was the voice of their conscience," Lavrov said. "Frankly speaking, we didn't expect that. We were ready to defend our wording of the text."

He said it was a sign that the global south would no longer blindly follow the western powers. "They don't want to be told to follow the [Ukraine president Volodymyr] Zelenskiy formula," said Lavrov. "This is disrespectful to developing countries. This is neo-colonialism from western countries and they have failed this time."

Lavrov also praised India's role in the negotiations, claiming it had pushed back against attempts to "politicise" the G20. India has historically deep ties with Russia, its largest supplier of arms, and has remained firmly neutral on the war in Ukraine. India turned down requests by other members for Ukraine to take part in this year's G20 summit.

> ***'We were able to prevent the west's attempts to Ukrainise the summit agenda'***
>
> **Sergei Lavrov**
> *Russia's foreign minister*

The US and EU countries, which have spent billions arming Ukraine against Russia, insisted that the agreement was a step forward in pushing for peace in the region.

The French president, Emmanuel Macron, said yesterday that the G20 summit had "sent a message of peace while Russia is still waging its war in Ukraine" and it had "confirmed the isolation of Russia". "Let's be honest, the G20 is not a forum for political discussion," he added. "This is not the place where we will see some major developments given the situation on the ground."

Canada's prime minister, Justin Trudeau, told reporters he had been hoping for stronger language on Russia but "if it were up to other leaders, it would have been much weaker".

The Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was in Russia last week to meet with Vladimir Putin over the resumption of the crucial Black Sea grain deal, said he had discussed it again at length with Lavrov at the summit.

While warning western powers that "any initiative that isolates Russia is bound to fail", Erdoğan said he was "not hopeless about the grain deal, it could start again".

While the Ukraine war hung heavily over proceedings, many of the G20 leaders were keen to emphasise that progress had been made in environmental commitments. Yesterday Rishi Sunak pledged a record $2bn (£1.6bn) to the Green Climate Fund after a commitment made by the G20 leaders to increase financial support.

However, the leaders' declaration sparked criticism for not going far enough in language around phasing out fossil fuels. The commitment to "phase down" rather than "phase out" coal remained the same, and other fossil fuels such as oil and gas were not mentioned at all.

Macron expressed his disappointment at what he described as the "insufficient" commitments by G20 member states on climate issues and said it was also the responsibility of emerging economies, as well as wealthy powers, to commit to net zero targets and weaning off coal in the next decade.

"Many countries need to do more," said Macron, adding that he was "sounding the alarm" over the global failure so far to meet the commitments laid out in the Paris climate agreement.

Perhaps the most significant announcement of the weekend was the launch of a new economic corridor that will link India with the Middle East and Europe, through a new network of rail and shipping infrastructure, although it remains in the early stages of planning.

The ambitious project was launched on Saturday by Modi, the US president, Joe Biden, the European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, and the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman. The plans and funding for the project will be laid out over the next few weeks.

Lula welcomes Putin

Vladimir Putin can attend next year's G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro without fear of arrest, the Brazilian president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, has said as he took leadership of the forum.

Speaking in Delhi, Lula - who has tried to position himself as a peacemaker - said the Russian president would be welcome at the 2024 event.

"If I'm president, and if he comes to Brazil, there's no reason he'll be arrested," the leftwinger told the news group Firstpost.

The international criminal court (ICC) issued a warrant for Putin's arrest for alleged war crimes in March. As a signatory of the Rome statute, Brazil is required to cooperate with ICC investigations, which-includes arresting the court's targets.

Lula's policy of not taking a clear side in the Ukraine war has irked many western leaders. Washington has accused him of "parroting Russian propaganda".

Lula defends what he calls his policy of neutrality, arguing that peace can only be achieved if some countries remain impartial.

"It's true that Russia invaded Ukraine without asking anyone. And that the US invaded Iraq without asking anyone," Lula told Firstpost, claiming Brazil was "100% opposed" to the invasion of any country.

Tom Phillips *Rio de Janeiro*



Analysis
Patrick Wintour



With its weaker stance on Putin the G20 lets Kyiv slip as a priority and underlines India's influence

It took Indian diplomats 200 hours of non-stop negotiations, 300 bilateral meetings and 15 drafts, but in the end the G20 countries reached a consensus on the war in Ukraine - one that largely retreated into generalised principles rather than the specific condemnation of Russia that the same group of leaders agreed upon when they met in Bali a year ago.

Moreover, no invitation was extended to Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, to address the gathering, so the only direct combatant around the table was Russia, represented by its foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov.

India is hailing the agreement as a diplomatic triumph. Going into the summit there had been three options for the leaders: a lowest-common-denominator agreement (the eventual outcome), a statement with footnotes allowing

'It was an obsession'
The 50-year search for Pinochet's victims
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Outcry over China's 'good for marriage' fad
Page 24







▲ *Joe Biden in Delhi yesterday with right, Rishi Sunak, and Narendra Modi, seen greeting Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, left*
PHOTOGRAPH: NEWSPIX INTERNATIONAL

some countries to disown parts of the agreement, or no declaration.

The agreement admits there are different assessments of the situation, but upholds the principles of national sovereignty, the UN charter and previous UN resolutions on Ukraine, and says use of nuclear weapons is impermissible. Critically, it does not repeat the statement made in Bali which says that most countries condemn Russia's invasion, or that Russia should withdraw its troops unconditionally and immediately.

India's external affairs minister, S Jaishankar, did not seem too bothered to justify the outcome. "Bali was Bali. New Delhi is Delhi. Bali was a year ago, the situation was different. Many things have happened since then," he said.

The outcome reflects India's rigid determination not to take sides in the war, but it is extraordinary that the majority of countries at the G20 opposing Russia's war were so prepared to be muzzled by a minority.

A UK official said the joint declaration, widely seen as weak, was effective at putting pressure on Moscow: "The G20 has forced [Vladimir] Putin to commit to a cessation of attacks on infrastructure, to withdrawal of troops and the return of territory."

Lavrov, unsurprisingly, did not share this interpretation: "We were able to prevent the west's attempts to 'Ukrainise' the summit agenda."

The compromise must be hard for Ukraine and will only increase its worry that the next diplomatic staging post – an EU decision on Ukraine's accession in December – will be equally empty. The Ukrainian foreign ministry said the G20 had "nothing to be proud of".

At one level the outcome is supremely irrelevant to the war. Nothing really has changed. Drones are still directed towards Kyiv, Ukraine still calls for more and heavier weapons, and Zelenskiy is starting to prepare his people for a third harsh wartime winter.

But at another level, the softening of the language is a further signal that as Joe Biden faces an election year Ukraine is perceptibly slipping down his list of foreign policy priorities as the need grows to nurture alliances to contain China in the Indo-Pacific.

Relatedly, it was out of deference to Narendra Modi's need for a clear diplomatic win that the US did not push the Ukraine issue to deadlock.

It is hard to overestimate how important the Democratic administration views India, a powerful rival to China. Kurt Campbell, often described as Biden's Indo-Pacific tsar, calls it "the most important relationship on the planet", adding: "It is no secret that India is one of most sought-after players on the global stage."

Lavrov claimed Biden knew he could not afford to alienate Modi, saying: "India has truly consolidated G20 members from the Global South."

If so, it suggests all Ukraine's efforts at diplomatic outreach in recent months – to Saudi Arabia, Turkey, India and parts of Africa – have not been much rewarded.

Washington for its part senses that if it is to isolate Beijing it has to be patient. Throughout the summit, US officials such as the deputy national security adviser, Jon Finer, tried to impose a wedge by referring to South Africa, India and Brazil as "the three democratic members of the Brics", saying that they and the US were all committed to the G20's success. "And if China is not, that's unfortunate for everyone," he said. "But much more unfortunate, we believe, for China." It is now up to Modi to see if the wider agenda he wanted to advance at the summit, concerning debt, multilateralism and the climate crisis, is pursued.



'I met him on the battlefield and saw how he bravely defended our lands'

Colonel Roman Kostenko

UK deserter
Plea to pardon soldier who joined war

Luke Harding
Dan Sabbagh

A decorated Ukrainian commander has urged Volodymyr Zelenskiy to intervene in the case of a British soldier who has been sentenced to 12 months in jail after deserting his unit to go to fight in Ukraine.

Alexander Garms-Rizzi, 21, slipped away from his regiment while it was deployed in Estonia and joined Ukraine's foreign legion. He spent six months fighting on the frontline near the southern city of Mykolaiv before returning to the UK.

In July, he became the first British soldier to be imprisoned for deserting the army and signing up with Ukraine's armed forces. He had defied orders and created a "security risk", a tribunal was told.

Roman Kostenko, a politician and special forces colonel, said Garms-Rizzi had served in Ukraine under his personal command. The soldier – part of an infantry regiment – was one of 10 foreign volunteers who in spring 2022 helped Kostenko beat back a Russian advance around Mykolaiv.

"He arrived soon after the full-scale invasion. Even though he was young, he was an accomplished soldier," Kostenko said. "He spoke fluent Russian and served as a translator. He shared his military experience with us, including on how to use foreign-made weapons."

Garms-Rizzi – whose mother is Russian – was "straightforward" when asked why he had volunteered to defend Ukraine, Kostenko said. "He considered he was fighting against a great evil. We had many conversations about this. It was a difficult moment, early in the war. He spent two months with us."

Kostenko is a deputy for the pro-European Golos party and chair of the Ukrainian parliament's intelligence committee. He has written to Zelenskiy and asked him to raise Garms-Rizzi's imprisonment with Downing Street.

"The unit he joined bravely and professionally performed combat missions in the south of Ukraine together with Ukrainian defenders," the letter reads. "I had the opportunity to meet him personally on the battlefield and watch how he, as part of a group, selflessly and bravely defended our lands. Despite his young age, and at that time he was 19 years old, he understood the strategic importance of defending Ukraine."

He continues: "I ask you to appeal to the leadership of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with a request to consider the possibility of a pardon."

Kostenko acknowledged the soldier had broken UK military law but said Garms-Rizzi's actions were morally justifiable at a time when Russia was bombing peaceful cities and murdering civilians. "His choice was right, from the point of view of humanity," Kostenko said. His presence in Ukraine had a positive effect on frontline morale, he added.

"It's bad for Britain if Ukraine loses this war. When volunteers from the UK and US stand with us on the battlefield we feel the whole world supports us. They are representatives of democratic countries. This is more important to us than Himars [long-range artillery] or rockets."

Garms-Rizzi is serving his sentence in a military detention centre. "The order not to go to Ukraine could not have been clearer. The order was there to protect British forces and the state from being dragged into the conflict," the judge advocate general, Darren Reed, told him.

If Zelenskiy raises the case, it could prove awkward for the UK. Garms-Rizzi deserted in March 2022. At the time, Liz Truss – then foreign secretary – backed Britons travelling to Ukraine to fight against Russia. "I do support that. That's something people can make their own decision about," she told the BBC.

The tribunal in July heard Garms-Rizzi was absent without leave for nearly six months. When his unit managed to contact him, the soldier, who lived in Russia until the age of 12 and had Ukrainian friends, admitted he had gone to join the war. He was arrested when he returned to Dover.

Approached for comment, a British army spokesperson said: "Serving personnel have a duty to the UK armed forces. They are not authorised to be absent and to join foreign services while serving the colours."

In brief

Sudan

At least 40 civilians die in airstrike on market

At least 40 civilians were killed and dozens injured in an airstrike by the Sudanese army on a market in Khartoum, a local volunteer group has said, marking the largest single-incident death toll since the war in Sudan began in April.

Air and artillery strikes in residential areas have intensified as the war between the army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) nears the five-month mark, with neither side declaring victory or showing any concrete signs of pursuing mediation.

Drones carried out a series of airstrikes yesterday morning on southern Khartoum, a large district of the city occupied mainly by the RSF, a witness who saw the attack told Reuters. Images shared by a body of local volunteers called the Southern Khartoum Emergency Room (SKER) showed many injured people and what appeared to be bodies covered in cloth.

Mohamed Abdallah, a spokesperson for the SKER, said the injured had to be transported on rickshaws and donkey carts.

In a statement, the RSF accused the Sudanese army of carrying out the attack and other strikes, while the army denied responsibility and blamed the RSF: "We only aim our attacks at the enemy's groupings and stations in different areas," Brig Gen Nabil Abdallah told Reuters.

The RSF has fanned out across Khartoum but the army has used heavy artillery and airstrikes to push it back, resulting in hundreds of civilian casualties. Strikes last week killed at least 51 people in two days. With most hospitals closed and no functioning local government, volunteers struggle to document the true number of those killed.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), which operates Bashair hospital in southern Khartoum, said the crowded Gorro market was hit at 7am, and at least 60 people had been wounded. Doctors had stopped trying to count as they operated. "Khartoum has been at war for almost six months. But still, the volunteers … are shocked and overwhelmed by the scale of horror that struck the city," said MSF's emergency coordinator, Marie Burton.

Conflict between the army and RSF broke out on 15 April, after tensions arose over integration of their troops in a new transition to democracy. Several countries have launched mediation efforts, but none has succeeded in bringing a halt to the fighting. **Reuters**

▼ Flooding in 2019 in Tuvalu, one of the small island nations taking on high-emitting countries in court
PHOTOGRAPH: MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES



Germany

Climate justice case for small island nations

In a landmark hearing, small island nations disproportionately affected by the climate crisis will today take on high-emitting countries, in a court in Hamburg, Germany, in the first climate justice case aimed at protecting oceans.

At the two-day hearing the countries, which include Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, will ask the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea to determine if greenhouse gas emissions absorbed by the marine environment should be classed as pollution. The oceans absorb 25% of carbon dioxide emissions, capture 90% of the heat caused by those emissions, and produce half the world's oxygen.

If the case succeeds, obligations would include reducing carbon emissions and protecting marine environments already damaged by CO_2 pollution. "Sea levels are rising rapidly, threatening to sink our lands below the ocean," said Kausea Natano, Tuvalu's prime minister. His country was suffering a "manifest injustice" due to climate change. **Karen McVeigh**

Nagorno-Karabakh

Routes to reopen after Lachin corridor deal

Azerbaijan's government and separatist Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh have struck a deal reopening two disputed transport links including a key route known as the Lachin corridor.

The moves – initially reported by Armenia's Armenpress state news agency and confirmed by Azerbaijan – appear to grant the decades-old demand to restore links between Azeri government-held territory and Nagorno-Karabakh, where Armenians seized control in the 90s.

Karabakh is recognised globally as part of Azerbaijan, but has been controlled by its population of about 120,000 ethnic Armenians since a war that coincided with the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Azerbaijan recaptured large swathes of Nagorno-Karabakh in a 2020 war, and for the past nine months has exerted pressure by restricting access to Armenia through the Lachin corridor.

Armenpress cited Karabakh authorities as saying that they had "decided to allow access of the Russian goods to our republic through the town of Askeran". **Staff and agencies**



Representative Example	Duration of Device Plan	Upfront Cost	Monthly Device Payment	Credit Amount	Total amount payable for device	Interest rate (fixed)	Representative APR	Cash price (to buy outright)	Airtime Plan until March 2024	Airtime Plan April 2024 - March 2025	Airtime Plan April 2025 - March 2026
Google Pixel 7 Pro 265GB	36 months	£30	£19.64	£707	£737	0%	0%	£737	£19.99	£19.99 + RPI% announced in Feb 2024 = Price A	Price A + RPI% announced in Feb 2025

***Each year your Airtime Plan will be increased by the Retail Price Index (RPI) rate of inflation announced in February plus 3.9%. If RPI is negative, we'll only apply the 3.9%. You'll see this increase on your April 2024 bill onwards. See o2.co.uk/prices.**
£19.64 Device Plan for 36 months and £19.99 monthly rolling Airtime Plan. £500 saving consists of £212 discount applied to Device Planand further £288 saving achieved by £8 per month discount on the 1GB, 5GB, 25GB, & 30GB Airtime Plans over 36 months. Offer ends 20 September 2023. O2 Switch Up cannot be used with the first 90 days from purchase. New & upgrading O2 customers (not previously on O2 Switch Up as part of a Plus Plan) who purchase a Plus Plan tariff directly from O2 only. The Bolt On is included within any Plus Plan. It will be removed automatically if your existing device plan is paid in full, or if you transfer your existing tariff from a Plus Plan to a Custom Plan. Eligible customers may swap their existing handset device (tablets etc are excluded) during the eligible period of their contract, subject to satisfying our terms & conditions. If approved, we will keep your device & pay off your existing contract before you get your new device. If refused, you will only be able to upgrade via our standard methods & early upgrade charges may apply. All requests to swap must be processed via one of our retail stores, unless we agree otherwise. Customers may only take out a new Custom Plan or Plus Plan following a successful device swap. Custom Plans & Plus Plans are subject to availability, status, credit checks & payment by direct debit. New contract price may be higher than existing depending on plans chosen. Customers will not be eligible to redeem any O2 Recycle offers when using O2 Switch Up. This Bolt On is also subject to your standard terms & conditions of service & is only for your personal non-commercial use. For full terms, see: https://www.o2.co.uk/termsandconditions/mobile/o2-switch-up.

'We must not forget'

Women who will not rest until victims of 1973 coup are found



▲ *Violeta Berríos holds a photograph of her husband, Mario, one of 26 men beaten, tortured and shot by the Caravan of Death during the coup of 1973*
PHOTOGRAPHS: CRISTIAN RUDOLFFI/ THE GUARDIAN



◀ *Soldiers round up aides of President Salvador Allende in Santiago on 11 September 1973; below, a memorial to the 'disappeared' in the cemetery of Calama*
PHOTOGRAPH: REUTERS

John Bartlett
Calama

For nearly two decades, Violeta Berríos and Victoria Saavedra scoured Chile's Atacama desert looking for any trace of their missing loved ones. Each evening, as dusk fell across the barren plain, they would pile a few small rocks to mark the extent of their search, then turn back into the gloom, agreeing to resume the next day.

In the weeks after Gen Augusto Pinochet's coup d'état deposed the democratically elected president Salvador Allende, a Puma helicopter landed in Calama, a dusty mining town in the Atacama. Its passengers were the members of what came to be known as the Caravan of Death.

On 19 October 1973, the death squad led 26 young men - who had already been beaten and tortured - to a hill on the outskirts of the town and shot them dead.

Berríos's husband, Mario Arguelles, a 34-year-old member of Allende's Socialist party, was among them. The youngest in the group, Saavedra's brother José, was 18. Their families were informed the next day, but no bodies were ever handed over. Eventually, the relatives took matters into their own hands. "Every time somebody had a lead - a disturbed patch of earth, some clothing or a bone - we'd head out into the desert once more," says Berríos, now 85. "It became an obsession."

In the late 1970s, she formed a support group for the families of the victims. They met weekly, and attendance dwindled only with the arrival of the pandemic. Nine of the women who lost their husbands have died, and others, like Saavedra, have moved away to other cities.

"I call those 26 men my children," she says, hauling herself uncomfortably on to a red sofa in the tiny home she once shared with her husband. For years she left the front door unlocked, in case he should ever walk back in.

"I never did all of this just for Mario, I did it for all of them, because they all suffered in the same way. We're a family."

Remains of 24 of the men have so far been identified, and Berríos is determined to find the last two before she dies.

As Chile marks the 50th anniversary of the coup today, millions of people still carry the aching horror of violence and loss that it unleashed. The country remains bitterly divided, with little common ground among political





Teresa Berríos's husband, Carlos, was shot in 1973

parties and factions - even when it comes to the most basic principles.

The leftist president, Gabriel Boric, and all four living ex-presidents have signed a declaration underlining their commitment to democracy, but Chile's rightwing parties have refused to sign. Recognition of the past has also proved thorny.

"There are people who make fun of these things, or don't believe things about what we lived through," says Teresa Berríos, 67.

Teresa, who is not related to Violeta but is a member of her victims' association, joined the Communist party in her teens, where she met Carlos Piñero Lucero in Chuquicamata, a tiny mining town near Calama. She fell in love at once, and was just 17 when she gave birth to their daughter in 1972. In September 1973, Teresa was stopped by troops in Chuquicamata and interrogated. The soldiers raped her and, several hours later, she was dumped on the street, trembling and terrified. Three weeks later her husband was shot by the Caravan of Death.

"I've carried this burden for 50 years," she said. "The only thing I want is for this never to happen again. Because it *did* happen. And Chile must not lose its memory."

Yet views on what occurred on 11 September 1973 remain polarised. At the end of May, a survey by Mori found 42% of respondents believed the coup "destroyed democracy", while 36% saw it as the moment Chile was "freed from Marxism". Among those aged 18-35, the poll found that an alarming 41% knew "little" or "nothing" about the coup d'état.

During the dictatorship, more than 40,175 people were victims of political executions, forced disappearances, political imprisonment or torture. Pinochet was arrested in London in 1998, but served no jail time for his alleged crimes and died under house arrest in 2006.

The remains of only 307 "disappeared" people have ever been found, with search efforts largely carried out by the families, and lingering "pacts of silence" among the perpetrators. However, on 30 August, the government announced its national search plan, under which the state will assume responsibility for locating missing victims for the first time.

One afternoon in 1991, word reached Violeta that new fragments had been uncovered by the desert wind. She rushed to the site outside of Calama, where ribs, skulls and knuckles poked out of the ground.

Following DNA testing in Austria, in 2018 Violeta was handed a phalange bone, a rib, and two bits of tendon belonging to her husband. Teresa received a tiny fragment of Carlos's cranium to bury in the cemetery in Calama.

"It's so hard to think that this is Mario," said Violeta, holding out an empty palm. "I knew Mario. He had a name. And you're saying this is him now? That isn't closure. I can't accept it."

The bare earth where the bodies were dumped was eventually ringed by a large concrete memorial in 2004, with a pillar representing each of the 26 victims. But it was not until 2020, after 47 years of aching silence, that eight former soldiers were charged with the executions by a Santiago court.

"That's not justice," said Violeta. "[The accused soldiers] lived free and in peace for most of their lives alongside their families. Our loved ones were imprisoned, tortured and murdered with their lives ahead of them.

"Of course this isn't a game of football where you win or lose. But who's won here? They have."

The Chilean armed forces declined a request for comment.

Eyewitness



▼ Hebron, Palestine
Mourners gather around the body of Milad al-Raee, a Palestinian teenager, during his funeral in Aroub refugee camp yesterday. The 16-year-old was shot dead by Israeli forces on Saturday at the entrance to the camp in the latest violent episode to rock the occupied West Bank
PHOTOGRAPH: HAZEM BADER/AFP/GETTY





▼ *A scene from the film, based on the hijacking in 1988, when the pilot resorted to some daredevil stuns to save the passengers* IMAGE: YOUTUBE

'Brazil's 9/11' Tale of little-known plane hijacking made into a film

Tom Phillips
Rio de Janeiro

Ninety-eight passengers had boarded São Paulo Airways flight 375 to Rio that morning but the man in seat 3C had a different destination in mind. As the Boeing 737-300 roared off the runway, Raimundo Nonato Alves da Conceição was sitting clutching a backpack with a box of ammunition and a .32 calibre revolver inside.

Enraged by the economic turbulence and hyperinflation convulsing Brazil as it emerged from two decades of military dictatorship in the late 1980s, the jobless 28-year-old had decided to crash a plane into Brasília's Planalto presidential palace to kill the country's then leader, José Sarney.

"Oh God in heaven!" the Boeing's commander, Fernando Murilo, reportedly gasped after Nonato stormed the cockpit, shot the co-pilot dead and announced his kamikaze plan. What followed must rank as one of the most bizarre and disturbing episodes in aviation history. For the next three hours, the pilot battled to save his passengers - and Brazil's president - with awe-inspiring aerial acrobatics that make the 2009 landing of US Airways flight 1549 in the Hudson River look tame.

Yet for all the drama, the September 1988 incident remains little known in Brazil, let alone internationally - something the director Marcus Baldini hopes to change with his latest movie, The Hijacking of Flight 375.

"How is it that we had an episode like this - a Brazilian 9/11 - and yet nobody knows what happened? It's astonishing," says Baldini, who was a 14 at the time. "I think it's the same with lots of people. When they find out, they say: 'Wow! I had no idea!'" says Baldini, whose film will be released in December.

He says his action-thriller celebrates flight 375's commander, a "Brazilian hero", who died in 2020 without ever receiving a public thank-you from the state. The director hopes it will be a box office hit after a bleak period for Brazil's film industry amid Covid and cuts in arts funding by Jair Bolsonaro's far-right administration.

The tale of flight 375 is also infused with the history and politics surrounding Brazil's turbulent transition to democracy four decades ago.

Nonato's motives have never been fully explained. According to Ivan Sant'Anna's 2000 book Black Box, the hijacker told police he was protesting against Sarney's failure to tame inflation and jail corrupt politicians - a haunting presage of the anti-establishment extremism that gripped Brazil during Bolsonaro's 2018-2023 tenure and culminated in January's assault on a presidential palace that Nonato also hoped to destroy.

Baldini sees the skyjacking as an extreme reaction to the tumult after the end of the 1964-85 regime. "It was a moment when Brazilian people harboured such great hopes over the end of the dictatorship and the start of democracy. There were all these economic plans - and things didn't get better," he says.

"There was hyperinflation and people suffered so much. And there was this sense that the hopes people had of the incoming democratic government looking after them was being betrayed.

> *'How is it we had an episode like this and nobody knows? It's astonishing'*
>
> **Marcus Baldini**
> *Director*

"I remember this feeling well," the director adds. "It was one of the things that helped me understand the mindset of the characters … this feeling of hope and abandonment. Prices were out of control. There was so much hunger. So much poverty. It really knocked people off balance."

Baldini says Nonato's attack was "a reckless, irresponsible, absolutely awful [act] - but one which somehow personified the anger people felt at the time".

Nonato's meltdown began early on 29 September 1988 when he boarded flight 375 from Belo Horizonte to Rio. As it approached Rio he shot his way into the cockpit and ordered the pilot to fly north to Brasília, sparking nearly three hours of terror for passengers from Brazil, Germany, Iran and Japan.

Fighter jets were scrambled and special forces troops assembled. Eventually, Murilo decided he had to act, performing two daredevil manoeuvres he hoped would wrongfoot the armed hijacker so that he could be subdued.

"I'd completely run out of fuel, so I thought since I'm going to die anyway, I'm going to try to do something to save myself and save everyone," the pilot recalled in 2018, two years before he died.

"They were extraordinarily daring manoeuvres in a plane that size," says Baldini, admitting several actors vomited while recreating those upside-down scenes in the studio. Murilo's gambit worked, allowing him to perform an emergency landing in Goiânia, about 100 miles from the capital. There, the hijacker was shot and taken to hospital where he died mysteriously three days later.

While the co-pilot died, flight 375's passengers - and the president - all survived.

Young Chinese women hit back at 'good for marriage' style tips

Helen Davidson
Taipei

A social media debate has erupted in China over a trend among some women to dress and behave in a way that's "good for marriage", with detractors saying it discourages independence.

China, like much of east Asia, is battling with a demographic crisis and young people are increasingly choosing to forgo marriage and children. Last year China officially recorded its first decline in population for more than 60 years.

As society grapples with government entreaties to build families amid rising living and child-rearing costs, some female influencers have driven an online trend focusing on making themselves more attractive to potential husbands.

The pastel makeup and modest clothing that are the hallmark of the "good for marriage" style are based on Brilliant Girls, a 2021 drama that centres around a woman who wants to get married as quickly as possible. Promotional social media posts by one of its stars, Yi Song, offering "good for marriage" styling suggestions, drew some controversy.



◀ *Some female influencers in China are posting advice on how to look demure in order to attract potential husbands*
PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE GOLDWATER/ALAMY

Japan's Women's Action Network, a women's group, said the trend also had roots in Japanese fashion culture.

On China's microblogging platform Weibo, women have attacked the trend under the hashtag "Suitable to be a wife is not a compliment; it's offensive", which has drawn tens of millions of engagements. One said: "I'm desperately working towards the 'difficult to marry' style … I'm a super feminist who loves to argue."

One response to a post with more than 260,000 likes and comments said: "People [comment on food blogs]: 'I really want to marry a wife like this.' All right, we get it; you want a free housemaid."

Young women in China are increasingly pushing back against traditional gender roles that see women as home-makers, as well as against general sexism and harassment. The country's #MeToo reckoning continues in fits and starts, despite social and legal obstacles to individual cases and government crackdowns on feminist groups.

Some women said the "good for marriage" trend sought to make women the only ones responsible for being an attractive partner, and reduced them to their potential value as property. One said: "When men consider 'suitable to be a son-in-law' as a compliment, then we can talk."

Additional research **Tzu-wei Liu**
Additional reporting **Reuters**

Larry Elliott
Why a shift in immigration may mean higher wages
Page 27

Business

Firms 'slow output and rein in hiring as high rates bite'

Phillip Inman

Businesses are pulling back on hiring and are slowing their output under the strain of rising borrowing costs, according to a study that gives a further signal that the Bank of England could limit future interest rate rises.

A modest pickup in manufacturing in August failed to prevent a slowdown in UK private sector economic activity, a survey of businesses by the accountancy firm BDO found.

City traders have cut their expectations for further rate rises. They forecast that the central bank will increase interest rates by 0.25 percentage points to a peak of 5.5% when its monetary policy committee meets on 21 September.

Expectations for policy tightening by the Bank are now their lowest since June, after a string of surveys this week showing a softening outlook for inflation, and the governor Andrew Bailey's comment that a peak in rates was "much nearer".

Labour market data released tomorrow is likely to show the jobs market slowing, with unemployment rising for a third consecutive month and employers cutting job vacancies.

BDO said its survey brought together all the main business surveys into a single index, where a figure above 95 indicates expansion.

"The effects of tighter monetary policy from the Bank of England are being reflected in the labour market," the report said, adding: "The employment index fell for its second consecutive month, dropping by 0.81 points to post a reading of 110.92 as the demand for workers decreased."

It added that higher rates were to blame for slowing business output growth, after the output index declined by 1.94 points to 97.04.

The report said output in the services sector had slipped slightly, while manufacturing had marginally returned to growth, for only the second time since October 2021.

Businesses were more optimistic about the year ahead after forecasts showed inflation would continue to fall towards the Bank's 2% target, with many indicating that they planned to hang on to staff in the event of an upturn.

Last week, Bailey said: "I think [the fall in inflation] will be quite marked by the end of this year.

"The question now is, as headline inflation comes down and people become more confident, that will we see inflation expectations continue to come down, too, and be reflected in wage bargaining?"

5%
Recent average salary increases offered by firms, falling from more than 6% only a few months ago

He said inflation expectations had moderated in recent months and firms had reported offering lower wage rises, with salary increases falling to 5% on average from above 6% only a few months ago.

The European Central Bank, which meets on Thursday, is expected to raise interest rates despite a string of business surveys showing the eurozone stands on the brink of recession.

Kaley Crossthwaite, a partner at BDO, said: "Businesses are reacting to the higher interest rate environment with conservative decisions about hiring.

"And yet some optimism prevails," she said, with confidence holding steady as businesses head into the "all-important golden quarter" in the run-up to Christmas.

"However, caution is the watchword," she added. "Predictions for a recession paint a weaker picture for the economy, and we can expect a slump in output, optimism and employment in the final months of 2023 as a result of rising unemployment and higher rates for businesses."

UK interest rate futures showed a 69% chance last Friday of a quarter-point rate rise to 5.5%, down from more than 80% early in the week. The chance of a further rise to 5.75% was 46%, with investors expecting cuts in rates to begin in about a year's time.

Essex rubbish dump starts new life as solar farm

Jillian Ambrose
Energy correspondent

The largest solar farm in Europe to be built on a closed landfill site has begun generating renewable electricity from a former rubbish dump in Essex.

The Ockendon solar farm, the third largest in the UK, includes more than 100,000 solar modules covering 70 hectares (173 acres) of land.

Its owner, the waste company Veolia, expects the solar array to generate enough clean electricity to power the equivalent of 15,000 homes. The company said it hoped to give "new life" to the former rubbish dump, which would otherwise have had limited options for redevelopment.

Donald Macphail, the chief operating officer of Veolia's treatment division, said the project would have "minimal ground-level impact", meaning that "the wildlife that has repopulated the restored land can continue to coexist with the technology".

There could be hundreds of hectares of closed landfill sites across the UK that could play host to solar arrays, according to Philippe Queruau, the electrification services manager at Veolia UK. In addition, thousands of hectares of active landfill sites could be used for solar arrays in the future.



▲ *Solar panels at the former landfill site at Ockendon in Essex, which is expected to provide enough power for 15,000 homes* PHOTOGRAPH: VEOLIA

"We're just scratching the surface for now," he said. "But we need a lot more solar, and landfills are a prime location."

The government aims to increase the UK's existing 14GW of solar power capacity fivefold to 70GW by 2035. This would require a project on the scale of Ockendon being installed roughly every five days for the next 12 years.

Frank Gordon, the director of policy at the Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology, said: "We urgently need more solar in the UK to help meet our legally binding net zero goals, and this summer's extraordinary global weather has further underlined the need for climate action."

Veolia is one of many companies installing solar power on urban rooftops such as those of hospitals and car parks. It is also exploring the potential for floating solar installations atop water reservoirs.

The greatest barrier to the UK's solar ambitions is the high demand for a connection to the national grid, which has led to a queue with a waittime of between 10 and 15 years.

Queruau said the Ockendon solar farm did not face a lengthy delay for a grid connection and would share parts of the grid infrastructure with another major solar farm nearby.

Hotelier Forte donates to Tories again despite vow not to do so

Alex Lawson

A hotels tycoon and disillusioned Conservative donor who vowed not to contribute to the party again has bolstered the Tory coffers in a move designed to support the arch-Brexiter Steve Baker.

Sir Rocco Forte, the Brexit-backing hotelier who helped to fund Boris Johnson's election win and hosted a £12,000 leadership victory party for him, had distanced himself from the party and repeatedly expressed frustration over its handling of Brexit.

However, Electoral Commission data shows Forte handed £10,000 to the Conservatives through their Wycombe branch this year, marking his first donation to the party since 2019, when he gave £100,000 on the eve of Johnson's election victory.

It is understood Forte specifically made the donation to support Baker, the MP for Wycombe.

Asked why Forte had performed an apparent U-turn, his spokesperson said: "He will continue to support individual Conservatives with the sorts of views he wants to see."

Earlier this year, Forte said he would not give the Tories further funds as there was "no point". He said: "What's the point of having a Conservative government which is following policies which haven't delivered good growth?

"We have a sort of social democratic government in parliament. We don't have a Conservative government and there's no one who really believes in driving the economy."

Another businessman, Michael Spencer, has also resumed donations to the Conservatives after a two-year hiatus, with a £5,000 donation. Lord Spencer declined to comment.

The billionaire founder of the broking firm Icap and an ex-Tory party treasurer, now chair of the right-leaning Centre for Policy Studies thinktank, joined the House of Lords in 2020 after being nominated by Johnson. He has donated about £5m in total to the Conservatives.

The donations data, released last week, showed that Labour had a record quarter for funding, receiving more than £10.4m. It was boosted by £3m from the supermarket tycoon David Sainsbury.

The Conservatives received £10m during the quarter, including a £5m donation from Frank Hester, the founder and chief executive of the Phoenix Partnership, a healthcare software company.

11 Sept 2023

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Fills you with dread. Letters. Demands. Stress.
Piling up at your front door. But there's always a way forward.

At a glance

Things can feel overwhelming.

Last year in the UK, percent of people had suicidal thoughts due to financial stress.	17
CALM are here to support anyone struggling.	
On average, someone calls our helpline every seconds.	59
You can also get practical advice through webchat or online guides, days a year.	365

▶ If you or anyone you know needs help, go to

thecalmzone.net

V3.0006192015

Immigration Post-Brexit shift may bring higher wages and greater self-sufficiency

Larry Elliott

Immigration played a key role in the UK's decision in 2016 to leave the EU. Opinion polls showed strong support among leave voters for an end to free movement and for Westminster to decide who should be allowed to enter the country for work. That's what the slogan "take back control" was largely about.

Since the Brexit vote, the mood has changed. There is still a feeling ministers need to do more to stop people in small boats crossing the Channel. But legal immigration has ceased to be such a hot political issue. The more relaxed mood is certainly not the result of Britain pulling up the drawbridge to immigrants in the past seven years. On the contrary, net migration - the number of people arriving less the number leaving - rose to a record 606,000 in 2022.

There were some one-off factors last year - the arrival of refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine, for example - which won't be repeated in the future. But even ignoring the people fleeing wars and persecution, the number of non-UK nationals either working or looking for a job rose by 257,000 in 2022.

As Samuel Tombs, an economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, has pointed out, immigration accounted for almost all the 0.9% increase in the size of the workforce in the year to the second quarter of 2023. Foreign-born workers have plugged the gap left by a shortage of domestic candidates and so helped ease supply shortages.

There has been a marked shift in where the new foreign-born workers are coming from. Before Brexit, free movement under the rules of the single market meant the vast majority arrived from EU countries. Under the points-based system, workers can arrive from anywhere in the world, provided they meet certain criteria. These include having a job offer of a certain skill level, that they can speak English and that they will be paid more than £26,200 a year.

The latest data shows that the four countries that secured the most work visas were India, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and the Philippines, with about half plugging gaps in the health and social care sector. Britain's gain, inevitably, comes at the expense of poorer countries losing some of their brightest and best workers.

Some "red wall" Conservative MPs have called for much tougher immigration controls, including raising the minimum salary required for a skilled overseas worker to £38,000. This would certainly give companies a compelling reason to substitute capital for labour but with considerable short-term costs. In a globalised world, companies can easily find skilled people from overseas to fill vacancies, whereas it will take time to recruit and train domestic employees.

The government is sending mixed signals. Tombs says the decision to raise the minimum salary an overseas citizen must earn to get a skilled worker visa by 2.3% this year - well below the 8%-plus jump in annual private sector earnings - suggests ministers are loosening the immigration rules by stealth. At the same time, though, the annual fee migrants pay to use the NHS has been raised from £624 to £1,035, and Rishi Sunak is making clear his reluctance to relax immigration rules to secure a bilateral trade deal with India. That makes the chances of an immediate breakthrough slim. Sunak would love a deal with the world's fastest-growing major emerging economy - but not at any price. India's key demand in the bilateral talks - more visas for Indian students and workers - is one that makes life difficult for Sunak.

It is a tough call for the prime minister, who needs to show voters that the economy can benefit from better-calibrated migration.

There is certainly evidence the geographical shift in immigration is positive for the UK. Data from Oxford University's migration observatory shows migrants from India and sub-Saharan Africa are more likely to be employed in high-skilled jobs and command higher salaries than those from eastern Europe. In 2020, the average salary for a non-EU-born worker was £31,400 - £3,000 higher than for an EU-born worker.

There have been problems for certain sectors - such as hospitality - which in the past relied heavily on well-educated migrant workers from the EU to fill vacancies. But if the idea was to craft a migration system that would enable the economy to become less dependent on low-skill, low-wage, low-productivity jobs, then the shift to a points-based system makes sense. If the supply of cheap workers is restricted and the cost of employing people rises, firms will have a greater incentive to boost spending on new labour-saving equipment. There are tentative signs of this happening.

Kallum Pickering, an economist at Berenberg bank, points out that UK business investment has increased by 35% since the low point reached during the spring 2020 Covid lockdown and is now 6% above its pre-Brexit vote high.

The upshot of deglobalisation and a changed immigration system may well be more expensive labour, higher levels of investment and a more self-sufficient economy. All would certainly be welcome.



In the latest data India, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and the Philippines secured the most UK work visas

◀ Filipino workers in the process of applying for UK work visas attend an English language lecture in Manila
PHOTOGRAPH: ELOISA LOPEZ/REUTERS

Barclays seeks climate response guru after activists target bank

Kalyeena Makortoff
Banking correspondent

Barclays has kicked off a search for a director to champion its climate efforts, after a bruising year in which it was targeted by campaigners over its environmental record.

The bank recently closed applications for a climate communications director based in London, which is believed to be one of the most senior roles dedicated to coordinating its public response to climate pressures. Responsibilities will include creating a "compelling narrative for climate transition", assessing "reputation and media risk" around climate issues and working to "influence the outcome of such issues in a positive way".

It comes after Barclays was targeted by climate campaigners at its AGM in May and faced pressure over its sponsorship of Wimbledon and its ties to the National Trust. The lender has also been hit by grassroots boycotts, including by a pensioner who refused to pay her council tax because of a link to the bank.

Campaigners are concerned over Barclays' support of carbon-heavy industries, it having been the top European funder of fossil fuels between 2016 and 2022, according to the Rainforest Action Network.

However, Barclays stressed it was working towards plans to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and noted that its energy sector financing had dropped by 25% since 2021.

Joanna Warrington, of Fossil Free London, said: "We've seen campaigning pressure expand beyond the oil giants like Shell and Equinor, on to banks and the massive funding they provide to companies building new oil and gas projects that would be impossible without it. Barclays is clearly scared. This new PR role is just another way for it to armour itself up."

The hiring follows similar moves by lenders including the Canadian bank RBC, which is hiring a head of climate transition to produce "lasting responses to climate activism".

The US bank Citigroup recently posted an advert for a vice-president for environmental, social and governance stakeholder engagement.

25%
Proportion by which Barclays says its financing of the energy sector has declined since 2021

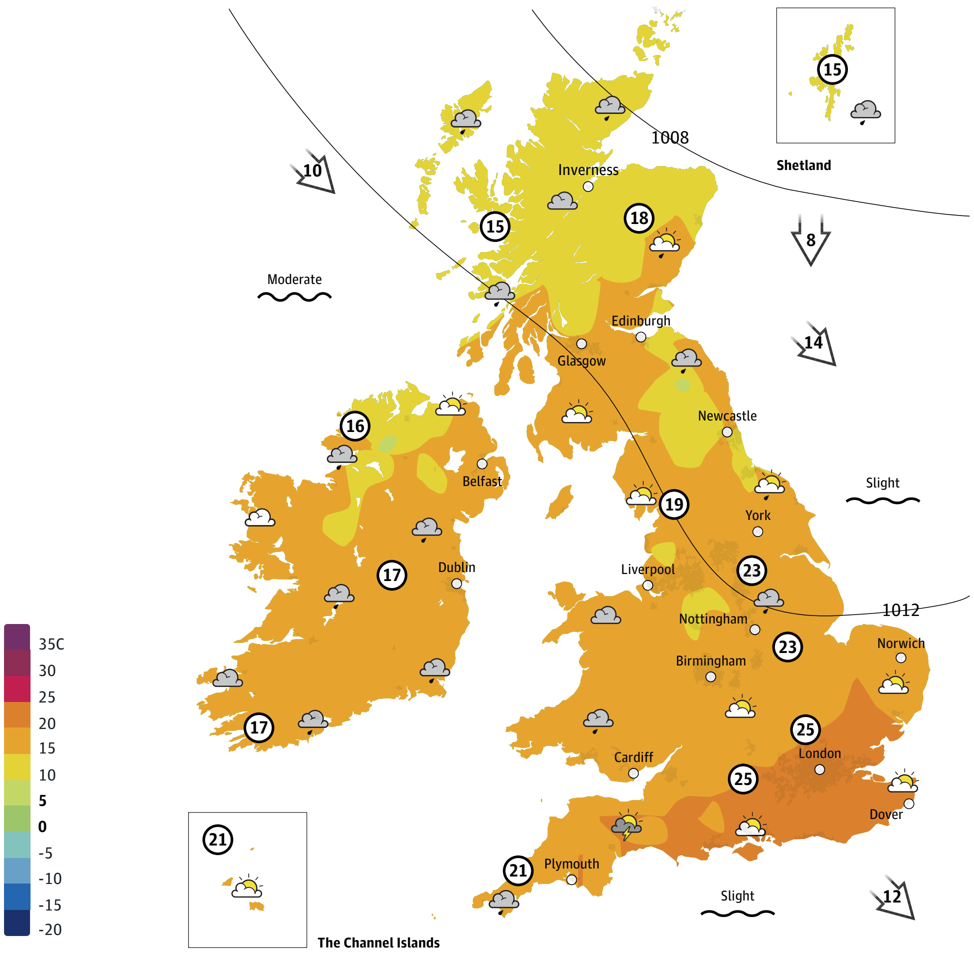
Richard Brooks, the climate finance director of the environmental group Stand.earth, said: "Major banks hiring senior staff as spin doctors to green their bad images on climate issues rather than actually tackling their fossil fuel financing is utterly sickening." He said banks needed to step up their climate efforts rather than "attempting to squash demands of shareholders, customers and the public alike".

A Barclays spokesperson said: "Barclays has made a significant number of sustainability hires in many teams, reflecting our commitment to work with customers and clients as they transition to a low-carbon business model and our own ambition to be net zero by 2050."

Weather
Monday 11 September 2023

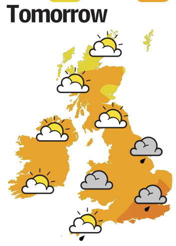
UK and Ireland Noon today

Sunny · Mist · Fog
Sunny intervals · Hazy
Mostly cloudy
Overcast/dull
Sunny showers
Sunny and heavy showers
Light showers
Rain · Sleet · Light snow
Snow showers
Heavy snow · Ice
Thundery rain
Thundery showers
Temperature, ºC
Wind speed, mph · Windy

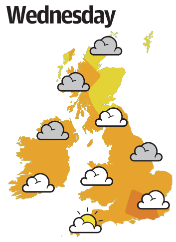


Forecast

Low 14 High 18
Tomorrow



Low 9 High 18
Wednesday



Carbon count

Daily atmospheric CO_2 readings from Mauna Loa, Hawaii (ppm):

Latest	
08 Sep 2023	418.58
Weekly average	
03 Sep 2023	418.64
10 Sep 2022	416.27
10 Sep 2013	393.92
Pre-industrial base	280
Safe level	350

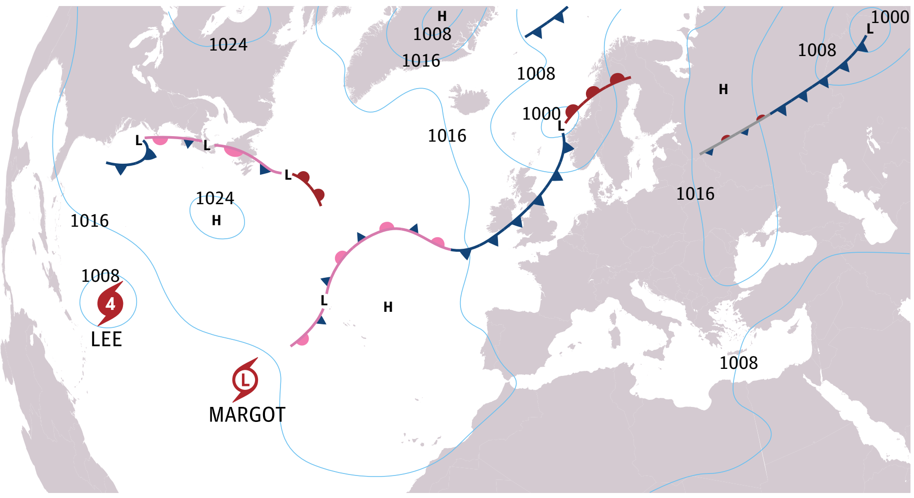
Source: NOAA-ESRL

Around the UK

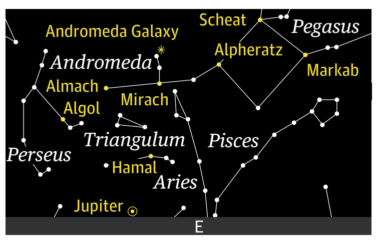
	Lows and highs	Precipitation	Air pollution
London	16 – 25	25%	Low
Manchester	14 – 21	80%	Low
Edinburgh	8 – 19	65%	Low
Belfast	10 – 17	65%	Low
Birmingham	14 – 23	85%	Low
Brighton	16 – 22	10%	Low
Bristol	16 – 21	25%	Low
Cardiff	16 – 21	25%	Low
Newcastle	11 – 20	45%	Low
Penzance	16 – 20	45%	Low

Atlantic front

Cold front
Warm front
Occluded front
Trough



Starwatch



The constellation of Andromeda is now well placed in the eastern sky, from where it will rise to oversee the entire winter observing season in the north. The chart shows the view looking east from London at about 10pm this week. If you have a good eastern horizon, you will also see Jupiter rising into the night.

Andromeda is one of 48 constellations listed in the 2nd century by Ptolemy. In Greek mythology Andromeda was the child of Cassiopeia. Bragging that her daughter (or herself in some versions) was more beautiful than the sea nymphs, Cassiopeia angered Poseidon. To appease him, Andromeda was offered to the sea monster Cetus. But in the nick of time, Perseus slew Cetus, saved Andromeda, then married her.

As the nights darken and Andromeda rises, keep an eye open for the faint smudge of light that is the Andromeda galaxy.

Stuart Clark *@DrStuClark*

Around the world

Algiers	30	Lisbon	25
Ams'dam	26	Madrid	27
Athens	26	Malaga	28
Auckland	17	Melb'rne	17
B Aires	18	Mexico C	25
Bangkok	32	Miami	33
Barcelona	27	Milan	32
Basra	46	Mombasa	29
Beijing	29	Moscow	19
Berlin	30	Mumbai	32
Bermuda	30	N Orleans	33
Brussels	27	Nairobi	26
Budapest	31	New Delhi	30
C'hagen	21	New York	27
Cairo	36	Oslo	19
Cape Town	13	Paris	28
Chicago	20	Perth	22
Corfu	30	Prague	28
Dakar	31	Reykjavik	10
Dhaka	34	Rio de J	28
Dublin	17	Rome	28
Florence	34	Shanghai	33
Gibraltar	27	Singapore	31
H Kong	28	Stockh'm	21
Harare	30	Strasb'g	32
Helsinki	21	Sydney	19
Istanbul	26	Tel Aviv	32
Jo'burg	28	Tenerife	30
K Lumpur	32	Tokyo	31
K'mandu	31	Toronto	23
Kabul	34	Vancouv'r	19
Kingston	35	Vienna	30
Kolkata	33	Warsaw	28
L Angeles	31	Wash'ton	28
Lagos	30	Well'ton	16
Lima	22	Zurich	30

High tides

Source: © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Times are local UK times

Aberdeen	--	--	**1237**	3.6m
Avonmouth	**0529**	9.8m	**1752**	10.5m
Barrow	**1013**	7.3m	**2230**	7.8m
Belfast	**1007**	2.9m	**2211**	3.3m
Cobh	**0347**	3.2m	**1619**	3.4m
Cromer	**0509**	4.2m	**1800**	4.2m
Dover	**1001**	5.6m	**2239**	5.7m
Dublin	**1042**	3.4m	**2246**	3.7m
Galway	**0407**	4.0m	**1622**	4.3m
Greenock	**1137**	2.8m	**2326**	3.1m
Harwich	**1010**	3.3m	**2244**	3.6m
Holyhead	**0930**	4.6m	**2140**	4.9m
Hull	**0435**	6.0m	**1718**	6.0m
Leith	**0105**	4.5m	**1348**	4.6m
Liverpool	**1004**	7.6m	**2219**	8.0m
London Bridge	--	--	**1223**	5.7m
Lossiemouth	**1055**	3.4m	**2258**	3.6m
Milford Haven	**0459**	5.4m	**1721**	5.8m
Newquay	**0354**	5.5m	**1615**	5.8m
North Shields	**0159**	4.2m	**1440**	4.2m
Oban	**0520**	3.0m	**1714**	3.3m
Penzance	**0322**	4.3m	**1544**	4.7m
Plymouth	**0410**	4.3m	**1627**	4.6m
Portsmouth	**1056**	4.0m	**2230**	4.0m
Southport	**0932**	7.3m	**2147**	7.7m
Stornoway	**0602**	3.8m	**1816**	4.2m
Weymouth	**0521**	0.4m	**1718**	0.6m
Whitby	**0232**	4.7m	**1512**	4.7m
Wick	**1023**	2.8m	**2226**	3.1m
Workington	**1030**	6.7m	**2246**	7.1m

Sun & Moon



Sun rises	0628
Sun sets	1924
Moon rises	0154
Moon sets	1844
New Moon	15 Sept

AccuWeather.com
Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather** ©2023

Lighting up

Belfast	1952 to 0651
Birm'ham	1932 to 0636
Brighton	1924 to 0631
Bristol	1935 to 0641
Carlisle	1939 to 0637
Cork	1959 to 0703
Dublin	1951 to 0653
Glasgow	1947 to 0643
Harlech	1942 to 0645
Inverness	1947 to 0639
London	1924 to 0629
M'chester	1935 to 0637
Newcastle	1935 to 0633
Norwich	1920 to 0623
Penzance	1945 to 0653

Rugby World Cup

Argentina win must be start of England revival

Robert Kitson, page 36 →

Football

Walker nearly quit national duty twice, reveals Southgate

Page 32 →



Sport



▲ *Mo Farah says farewell to his fans after finishing fourth at the Great North Run, the final race of his illustrious career*
STU FORSTER/GETTY IMAGES

Glory under fire

Farah's legacy after his retirement from running? It's complicated



Sean Ingle

No sooner had the final race of Mo Farah's career come to an end yesterday than the eulogies began. "Thanks for the memories, the medals, the excitement, the smile, the Mobot, it's all been memorable," the BBC's Steve Cram proclaimed after Farah had finished fourth in the Great North Run, before hailing him as "one of the greatest athletes the world has ever seen". It was a celebration worthy of a deity. And incomplete.

Take it from someone with a front-row seat at Farah's four Olympic gold medals, five of his six world titles, and many of his media love-ins and dust-ups: his legacy is more complex and disputed. Many will retain one image of him above all: the lovable refugee from Somalia, stealing the nation's hearts at the London 2012 Games. But you don't reach the summit, and remain there into your mid-30s, without guile or steel.

The former UK Athletics performance director Neil Black put it best. "You may have read things about Mo," he said. "But the critical bit is that on the start line he believes that he can run the last 400m faster than anyone. He believes he could lift any weight heavier than his rivals. And he believes that if he had to fight anyone there he could kick the shit out of them."

The crucial formula was being able to run 400m in 49 seconds. It meant that from 2011 to 2017 his opponents were helpless as a 5,000m or 10,000m evolved into a one-lap sprint finish, a Mobot, and a medal ceremony. He heads into retirement holding British records at almost every distance from 1500m to the marathon. But where his story veers next depends on whether you are a sceptic or a believer; there are plenty of both in track and field. The sceptics point to his late development into the world's super elite – his first global title came at 28 – and the fact his greatest triumphs came while coached by Alberto Salazar, who was banned for four years in 2019 for "orchestrating and facilitating prohibited doping conduct" after an investigation by the US Anti-Doping Agency. Salazar denied any wrongdoing but lost his appeal.

And the believers? They note that Farah has never been charged with any offences, and has always denied any wrongdoing. Meanwhile Salazar attributed Farah's success to better preparation after moving to his Nike Oregon Project group in late 2010. "He was flitting around before joining us," he said. "His training was haphazard. He was all over the place. He did no weight training. And technically, Mo tended to over-stride towards the end of races."

Opinions remain divided over Salazar. Black once hailed him as a "genius", while others were appalled at stories of him testing banned testosterone on his sons. Salazar said he did this to see if someone could be sabotaged into a positive doping test. However, Farah felt a tremendous loyalty to Salazar, not only sticking with him for two years after a BBC/ProPublica investigation raised concerns in 2015, but refusing to put the knife in even after he was banned, when it would have been the easier PR move.

Maybe that does him credit. But I will also never forget a fractious encounter at the 2019 Chicago marathon, when Farah was asked whether he felt let down by Salazar and replied: "I feel let down by you guys to be honest. The headline is Farah, Farah, Farah. There is no allegation against me. I've not done anything wrong. Let's be clear – these allegations are about Alberto Salazar and the Oregon Project." Later that month Nike closed down the Oregon Project, saying the situation around Salazar was creating too great a distraction for the athletes.

While he didn't always see eye to eye with the press, Farah always faced them, in good times and bad. He would never have made a great poker player, however. His "tells" when nervous – particularly his short sentences – were obvious. It all meant that covering the wild twists of Farah's career was rarely boring. If he wasn't chasing gold medals, he was fending off questions about L-Carnitine, US Anti-Doping, or his links with the controversial coach Jama Aden. In 2019 he even managed to turn an otherwise sedate London marathon press conference into a huge story by criticising the legendary athlete Haile Gebrselassie after a bag containing £2,600, a Tag watch and two mobile phones was stolen from his hotel in Ethiopia. It sparked days of allegation and counter-accusation, with Gebrselassie claiming Farah had not paid his $3,000 hotel bill, despite a 50% discount, and had "punched and kicked a husband and his wife". Farah's team insisted he was acting in self-defence after his training partner Bashir Abdi was threatened – and claimed the athlete's wife came at him holding dumbbells. Farah has never commented on the hotel bill.

While he didn't always see eye to eye with the press, Farah always faced them, in good times and bad

Even now Farah continues to make headlines – most recently with his claims that he was trafficked as a child after his father was killed in the civil war. He also remains Britain's most popular athlete, even though Katarina Johnson-Thompson and Josh Kerr won gold at the recent world championships. That was obvious from the wall of sound that greeted him along the 13.1 miles from Newcastle to South Shields. For those fans, Farah's legacy is simple: king of his sport, knight of the realm, a medal factory extraordinaire. Others, though, will never have such blind faith.

The week ahead



Mahika Gaur is on the hunt for more wickets against Sri Lanka tomorrow

Today

Football (7.45pm unless stated)
European Championship qualifying
Group D Armenia v Croatia (5pm) *VS1*; Latvia v Wales *S4C/BBCi/VS1*. **Group J** Iceland v Bosnia-Herzegovina; Portugal v Luxembourg *VS2*; Slovakia v Liechtenstein
European U21 C'ship qualifying
Group Two Spain v Scotland (8pm). **Group Six** L'bourg v England (5pm)
Cricket
Second Women's ODI
Pakistan v South Africa, Karachi (11.30am)
Tennis
Davis Cup Finals
Manchester/Bologna/Valencia/Split (to Sun)
WTA Japan Open
Osaka (to Sun)
WTA San Diego Open
California (to Sun)
Cycling
Vuelta a España
Spain (to Sun) *Eurosport*
Snooker
Shanghai Masters
China (to Sun)
Racing
Brighton *SSR*, Newcastle *SSR*, Newton Abbot *SSR*, Perth

Tomorrow

Football (7.45pm unless stated)
European Championship qualifying
Group A Norway v Georgia *VS1*; Spain v Cyprus. **Group C** Italy v Ukraine *VS2*; Malta v North Macedonia. **Group I** Israel v Belarus; Romania v Kosovo; Switzerland v Andorra. **Group F** Belgium v Estonia; Sweden v Austria
International friendlies
Germany v France (8pm); Japan v Turkey (1.20pm); Scotland v England *C4*
European U21 C'ship qualifying
Group One Republic of Ireland v San Marino (7.30pm). **Group Six** Ukraine v Northern Ireland (5.30pm). **Group Nine** Lithuania v Wales (4pm)
Papa John's EFL Trophy
North: Group G Notts County v Wolves U21
South: Group D Peterborough Utd v Cambridge Utd (7pm)
Cricket
Third ODI
South Africa v Australia, Potchefstroom (midday) *SSM*
Second Women's ODI
England v Sri Lanka, Northampton (12.30pm) *SSME*
Asia Cup
Super Four India v Sri Lanka, Colombo (10.30am) *TNTS11*
Racing
Catterick *RUK*, Kelso *RUK*, Leicester *RUK*, Worcester

Wednesday

Cricket
Third ODI
England v New Zealand, The Oval (12.30pm) *SSC*
Racing
Bath, Carlisle *RUK*, Kempton *RUK*, Uttoxeter *SSR*

Thursday

Rugby union
World Cup
Pool A France v Uruguay (8pm) *ITV1*
Cricket
Third Women's ODI
England v Sri Lanka, Grace Road (12.30pm) *SSME*
Third Women's ODI
Pakistan v South Africa, Karachi (11.30am)

Asia Cup
Super Four Pakistan v Sri Lanka, Colombo (10.30am) *TNTS1*
Golf
Fortinet Championship
Napa, California (to Sun) *SSG*
BMW PGA Championship
Virginia Water, Surrey (to Sun) *SSG*
Racing
Chelmsford *RUK*, Doncaster *ITV4/SSR*, Epsom *RUK*, Ffos Las *SSR*

Friday

Football (7.45pm unless stated)
Sky Bet Championship
Hull v Coventry; Southampton v Leicester (8pm) *SSF*
Sky Bet League Two
Salford City v Notts County
Cinch Scottish Championship
Ayr v Partick *BBCi*
Rugby union
World Cup
Pool A
New Zealand v Namibia (8pm) *ITV1*
Rugby league
Betfred Super League
Leigh v Wakefield (8pm); Warrington v St Helens (8pm) *SSAr*; Wigan v Castleford (8pm)
Cricket
Fourth ODI
England v New Zealand, Lord's (12.30pm) *SSC*
Fourth ODI
South Africa v Australia, Centurion (midday) *SSM*
Asia Cup
Super Four India v Bangladesh, Colombo (10.30am)
Golf
Women's Swiss Open
Ennetsee (to Sun)
Cycling
Women's Tour de Romandie
Switzerland (to Sun)
Racing
Chester, Doncaster *ITV4/SSR*, Salisbury *RUK*, Sandown *RUK*

Saturday

Football (3pm unless stated)
Premier League
Aston Villa v Crystal Palace; Fulham v Luton; Man Utd v Brighton; Newcastle v Brentford (5.30pm) *SSPL*; Tottenham v Sheffield Utd; West Ham v Manchester City; Wolves v Liverpool (12.30pm) *TNTS1*
Sky Bet Championship
Blackburn v Middlesbrough; Bristol City v West Brom; Cardiff v Swansea (7.45pm) *SSF*; Huddersfield v Rotherham; Norwich v Stoke; Preston v Plymouth; QPR v Sunderland; Sheffield Wed v Ipswich; Watford v Birmingham
Sky Bet League One
Barnsley v Burton Albion; Derby v Portsmouth; Exeter v Cheltenham; Fleetwood v Oxford Utd; Lincoln City v Carlisle; Peterborough Utd v Leyton Orient; Port Vale v Northampton; Reading v Bolton; Shrewsbury v Bristol Rovers; Stevenage v Charlton; Wigan v Cambridge Utd; Wycombe v Blackpool
League Two
AFC Wimbledon v Crewe; Accrington Stanley v Sutton Utd; Bradford City v Harrogate; Colchester v Mansfield; Crawley v Tranmere; Forest Green v Doncaster; Gillingham v Morecambe; MK Dons v Stockport County; Newport County v Barrow; Swindon v Walsall; Wrexham v Grimsby
Vanarama National League
Aldershot v Gateshead; Bromley v Oldham; Ebbsfleet Utd v Chesterfield; Fylde v Eastleigh; Halifax v Dorking; Hartlepool v Woking; Kidderminster v Solihull Moors (5.30pm) *TNTS1*; Maidenhead Utd v Boreham Wood; Oxford City v Dag & Red; Rochdale v Barnet; Wealdstone v Altrincham; York v Southend

Cinch Scottish Premiership
Celtic v Dundee; Hearts v Aberdeen; Kilmarnock v Hibernian; Motherwell v St Mirren; Ross County v Livingston; St Johnstone v Rangers (12.30pm) *SSF*
Cinch Scottish Championship
Arbroath v Airdrieonians; Dundee Utd v Morton; Queen's Park v Dunfermline; Raith v Inverness CT
Cinch Scottish League One
Annan Athletic v Stirling Albion; Cove Rangers v Kelty Hearts; Falkirk v Queen of the South; Hamilton v Alloa; Montrose v Edinburgh City
Cinch Scottish League Two
East Fife v Clyde; Elgin v Dumbarton; Forfar v Spartans; Peterhead v Bonnyrigg Rose; Stenhousemuir v Stranraer
Rugby union (3pm unless stated)
World Cup
Pool B Ireland v Tonga (8pm) *ITV1*
Pool C Wales v Portugal (4.45pm) *ITV1*
Pool D Samoa v Chile (2pm) *ITV1*
Premiership Cup
Pool stage Bath v Jersey (1pm) *TNTS2*; Caldy v Ampthill; Exeter v Cornish Pirates; Harlequins v Coventry; London Scottish v Doncaster; Northampton v Cambridge; Saracens v Gloucester (2pm)
Rugby league
Betfred Super League
Catalans Dragons v Leeds (5pm) *SSAr*; Hull FC v Huddersfield (3pm); Hull KR v Salford (7.30pm) *SSAr*
Betfred Championship
Newcastle v Barrow (3pm); Toulouse v Featherstone (5pm)
Cricket (10.30am unless stated)
Metro Bank One-Day Cup
Final Leicestershire v Hampshire, Trent Bridge (11am)
Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy
Pool stage Blaze v Vipers, L'borough; Diamonds v Sunrisers, Riverside; Sparks v Stars, Edgbaston; Thunder v Storm, Old Trafford
Athletics
Diamond League
Eugene, US
Formula One
Singapore Grand Prix qualifying
Marina Bay (2pm) *SSF1*
Racing
Bath *SSR*, Chester *SSR*, Doncaster *ITV4/SSR*, Lingfield *SSR*, Musselburgh *RUK*

Sunday

Football (3pm unless stated)
Premier League
Bournemouth v Chelsea (2pm) *SSPL*; Everton v Arsenal (4.30pm) *SSPL*
Sky Bet Championship
Millwall v Leeds (midday) *SSF*
FA Women's Championship
Birmingham v Charlton (2pm); Durham v London City (midday); Reading v Southampton (midday); Sheffield Utd v Lewes (midday); Sunderland v Crystal Palace (2pm); Watford v Blackburn (2pm)
Rugby union
World Cup
Pool B South Africa v Romania (2pm) *ITV1*
Pool C Australia v Fiji (4.45pm) *ITV1*
Pool D England v Japan (8pm) *ITV1*
Premiership Cup
Pool stage Bristol v Ealing (2.30pm)
Rugby league (3pm unless stated)
Betfred Championship
Keighley v Halifax; London Broncos v Bradford; Swinton v Whitehaven; Widnes v Sheffield
Cricket
Fifth ODI
South Africa v Australia, Johannesburg (9am)
Asia Cup
Final tbc v tbc (10.30am)
Formula One
Singapore Grand Prix
Marina Bay (1pm)
Racing
Doncaster, Musselburgh

The main event

England v Japan *Sunday 8pm, ITV1*

Steve Borthwick's side proved many doubters wrong by beating Argentina and will hope to keep their momentum going against the Brave Blossoms



Football results

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFYING

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
France	5	5	0	0	11	0	+11	15
Netherlands	4	3	0	1	8	5	+3	9
Greece	5	3	0	2	10	5	5	9
Rep of Ireland	5	1	0	4	5	7	-2	3
Gibraltar	5	0	0	5	0	17	-17	0

Greece (2) 5 Pelkas 9, Mavropanos 23 82, Masouras 70 90+1 — **Gibraltar** (0) 0

Republic of Ireland (1) 1 Idah 5pen — **Netherlands** (1) 2 Gakpo 19pen, Weghorst 56

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
England	5	4	1	0	16	2	+14	13
Ukraine	4	2	1	1	5	5	0	7
Italy	3	1	1	1	4	3	+1	4
North Macedonia	4	1	1	2	5	12	-7	4
Malta	4	0	0	4	1	9	-8	0

North Macedonia (0) 1 Bardhi 81 — **Italy** (0) 1 Immobile 47

Ukraine (1) 1 Zinchenko 26 — **England** (1) 1 Walker 41

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Albania	5	3	1	1	8	3	5	10
Czech Republic	4	2	2	0	7	2	5	8
Moldova	5	2	2	1	5	5	0	8
Poland	5	2	0	3	6	8	-2	6
Faroe Islands	5	0	1	4	2	10	-8	1

Albania (1) 2 Asani 37, Daku 62 — **Poland** (0) 0

Faroe Islands (0) 0 — **Moldova** (0) 1 Rata 53

Group F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Belgium	4	3	1	0	8	1	+7	10
Austria	4	3	1	0	9	3	+6	10
Sweden	4	2	0	2	10	5	+5	6
Estonia	4	0	1	3	2	11	-9	1
Azerbaijan	4	0	1	3	2	11	-9	1

Azerbaijan (0) 0 — **Belgium** (1) 1 Carrasco 38

Estonia (0) 0 — **Sweden** (3) 5 Gyokeres 18, Kulusevski 24, Isak 39, Quaison 75, Claesson 90

Group G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Hungary	4	3	1	0	7	1	+6	10
Serbia	5	3	1	1	9	4	+5	10
Montenegro	5	2	2	1	5	5	0	8
Bulgaria	5	0	2	3	3	8	-5	2
Lithuania	5	0	2	3	4	10	-6	2

Lithuania (1) 1 Paulauskas 45 — **Serbia** (3) 3 Mitrovic 21 32 43

Montenegro (1) 2 Savic 45+1, Jovetic 90+6 — **Bulgaria** (0) 1 Borukov 79

Group H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Denmark	6	4	1	1	12	5	+7	13
Slovenia	6	4	1	1	13	6	+7	13
Finland	6	4	0	2	11	4	+7	12
Kazakhstan	6	4	0	2	9	5	+4	12
Northern Ireland	6	1	0	5	4	8	-4	3
San Marino	6	0	0	6	0	21	-21	0

Finland (0) 0 — **Denmark** (0) 1 Højbjerg 86

Kazakhstan (1) 1 Samorodov 27 — **Northern Ireland** (0) 0

San Marino (0) 0 — **Slovenia** (2) 4 Vipotnik 4, Mlakar 16, Lovric 61, Karnicnik 67

Group I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Switzerland	5	3	2	0	14	5	+9	11
Romania	5	2	3	0	7	4	+3	9
Israel	5	2	2	1	6	7	-1	8
Belarus	5	1	1	3	4	10	-6	4
Kosovo	5	0	4	1	5	6	-1	4
Andorra	5	0	2	3	3	7	-4	2

Andorra (0) 0 — **Belarus** (0) 0

Kosovo (0) 2 Muriqi 65 90+4 — **Switzerland** (1) 2 Freuler 14, Rrahmani 79og

Romania (1) 1 Alibec 27 — **Israel** (0) 1 Gloukh 53

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLIES
China 1 Malaysia 1; Germany 1 Japan 4; Hungary 1 Czech Republic 1; Mexico 2 Australia 2; South Africa 0 Namibia 0; USA 3 Uzbekistan 0

SKY BET LEAGUE ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Stevenage	7	4	2	1	10	5	+5	14
Bolton	6	4	1	1	12	7	+5	13
Exeter	7	4	1	2	9	4	+5	13
Port Vale	6	4	1	1	7	10	-3	13
Portsmouth	6	3	3	0	9	2	+7	12
Cambridge Utd	6	4	0	2	8	4	+4	12
Oxford Utd	6	4	0	2	9	7	+2	12
Lincoln City	6	3	2	1	10	6	+4	11
Barnsley	6	3	1	2	14	7	+7	10
Wycombe	6	3	1	2	6	9	-3	10
Derby	6	3	0	3	11	8	+3	9
Blackpool	6	2	3	1	4	4	0	9
PeterboroughUtd	6	3	0	3	8	9	-1	9
Shrewsbury	6	3	0	3	4	6	-2	9
Northampton	6	2	1	3	5	6	-1	7
Leyton Orient	7	2	1	4	6	12	-6	7
Charlton	6	2	0	4	7	9	-2	6
Bristol Rovers	6	1	3	2	6	8	-2	6
Carlisle	7	1	3	3	6	8	-2	6
Reading	6	2	0	4	4	5	-1	5
Wigan	6	3	1	2	10	7	+3	2
Burton Albion	6	0	2	4	2	9	-7	2
Fleetwood Town	6	0	1	5	3	10	-7	1
Cheltenham	6	0	1	5	0	8	-8	1

Exeter (0) 1 Mitchell 48 7,004 — **Leyton Orient** (0) 2 Pigott 55, Sotiriou 90

Stevenage (1) 2 Reid 15 74 4,228 — **Carlisle** (1) 2 Maguire 20, Garner 90

SKY BET LEAGUE TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Gillingham	7	5	0	2	5	5	0	15
Notts County	7	4	2	1	13	11	+2	14
Mansfield	7	3	4	0	14	7	+7	13
MK Dons	7	4	1	2	14	12	+2	13
Swindon	6	3	3	0	20	11	+9	12
Crewe	7	3	3	1	17	11	+6	12
Wrexham	7	3	3	1	17	15	+2	12
Barrow	6	3	2	1	7	5	+2	11
Walsall	7	3	2	2	11	11	0	11
Crawley	7	3	2	2	11	13	-2	11
AFC Wimbledon	7	2	4	1	10	6	+4	10
Grimsby	7	2	4	1	9	6	+3	10
Newport County	7	3	1	3	15	14	+1	10
Morecambe	6	3	1	2	6	6	0	10
Accrington Stanley	7	3	1	3	9	10	-1	10
Bradford City	7	2	3	2	5	7	-2	9
Stockport County	7	2	2	3	10	11	-1	8
Salford City	7	2	1	4	9	11	-2	7
Forest Green	7	2	1	4	5	12	-7	7
Colchester	6	2	0	4	8	8	0	6
Harrogate	7	2	0	5	4	8	-4	6
Tranmere	7	1	0	6	8	12	-4	3
Sutton Utd	7	1	0	6	10	16	-6	3
Doncaster	7	0	2	5	5	14	-9	2

AFC Wimbledon (1) 1 Davison 32 7,607 — **Stockport County** (0) 2 Barry 50, Collar 62

Accrington Stanley (0) 0 3,094 — **Mansfield** (2) 3 Keillor-Dunn 29, Maris 36, Lewis 75

Bradford City (0) 1 Gilliead 89 18,879 — **Grimsby** (1) 1 Rose 43

Colchester (1) 2 Taylor 11, Ihionvien 87 — **Tranmere** (0) 0 3,474

Crawley (1) 4 Tsaroulla 5,Campbell 54 67, Gladwin 79 — **Newport County** (1) 1 Bogle 10 2,663

Forest Green (1) 1 Brown 35 1,855 — **Crewe** (0) 4 Long 49, Baker-Richardson 60 69, Nevitt 82

Gillingham (0) 1 Shaun Williams 90 — **Harrogate** (0) 0 5,778

MK Dons (0) 1 Harvie 46 8,011 — **Notts County** (0) 1 Cameron 66

Salford City (1) 1 Smith 15 2,847 — **Walsall** (0) 2 Draper 59, McEntee 77

Swindon (3) 5 Young 5 23, Cain 16, Kemp 65, Hepburn-Murphy 87 — **Sutton Utd** (2) 3 Clay 34, Goodliffe 39, Smith 77 8,389

Wrexham (1) 2 Young 37, Lee 88 10,254 — **Doncaster** (0) 1 Faal 52

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Barnet	8	6	1	1	17	8	+9	19
Chesterfield	8	6	1	1	22	15	+7	19
Solihull Moors	8	4	4	0	15	8	+7	16
Hartlepool	8	5	0	3	19	17	+2	15
Halifax	8	3	4	1	8	6	+2	13
Gateshead	8	3	3	2	20	12	+8	12
Ebbsfleet United	8	4	0	4	15	12	+3	12
Woking	8	3	3	2	11	9	+2	12
Bromley	8	3	3	2	11	10	+1	12
Rochdale	8	3	2	3	11	9	+2	11
Wealdstone	8	3	2	3	10	12	-2	11
Altrincham	8	2	4	2	13	15	-2	10
Dag & Red	8	3	1	4	10	12	-2	10
Maidenhead Utd	8	2	4	2	7	9	-2	10
Aldershot	8	3	1	4	15	18	-3	10
Oxford City	8	2	3	3	16	14	+2	9
Oldham	8	1	4	3	9	12	-3	7
Boreham Wood	8	1	4	3	8	12	-4	7
Kidderminster	8	1	4	3	4	8	-4	7
Eastleigh	8	1	4	3	7	14	-7	7
Dorking Wanderers	8	1	3	4	7	14	-7	6
Fylde	8	1	2	5	13	21	-8	5
York	8	0	4	4	10	17	-7	4
Southend	8	4	1	3	15	9	+6	3

Cricket scoreboard

ASIA CUP
Super Four
Colombo (RPS) India 147-2 (SS Gill 58, RG Sharma 56) v Pakistan. Match to conclude today (reserve day).

LV= COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP
Division One (first day of four)

Kent v Nottinghamshire

Canterbury Kent (3pts) lead Nottinghamshire (1) by 387 runs with six first-innings wickets remaining.

Kent First innings

BG Compton b Harrison	18
Z Crawley c & b Harrison	158
DJ Bell-Drummond c Moores b Fernando	60
T Muyeye c Harrison b Mullaney	35
***JA Leaning** not out	54
†HZ Finch not out	42
Extras (b6, lb9, w5)	20
Total (for 4, 96 overs)	387

Fall 95, 248, 248, 307. **To bat** JDM Evison, ASS Nijjar, YS Chahal, NN Gilchrist, MG Hogan.
Bowling Hutton 13-1-73-0; Fernando 16-2-63-1; Paterson 19-0-64-0; James 8-3-21-0; Harrison 24-1-103-2; Mullaney 16-2-48-1.
Nottinghamshire BT Slater, H Hameed, M Montgomery, JE Clarke, LW James, *SJ Mullaney, †TJ Moores, CL Harrison, BA Hutton, AM Fernando, D Paterson.
Toss Kent elected to bat.
Umpires M Burns and PR Pollard.

Lancashire v Middlesex

Old Trafford Middlesex (9pts) lead Lancashire (2) by 132 runs with two first-innings wickets remaining.

Middlesex First innings

MD Stoneman c Hartley b Bailey	0
SD Robson not out	56
JB Cracknell b Williams	1
JL Davies c Salt b Wood	4
MDE Holden c Bell b Wood	0
†JA Simpson c Salt b Balderson	1
RF Higgins b Williams	41
JM de Caires c Bell b Bailey	14
J Yadav c Wells b Bailey	4
***TS Roland-Jones** not out	2
Extras (lb5, nb4)	9
Total (for 8, 58 overs)	132

Fall 4, 5, 16, 18, 19, 83, 120, 130.
To bat ER Bamber.
Bowling Bailey 16-8-24-3; Williams 16-6-26-2; Wood 12-1-31-2; Balderson 12-4-40-1; Hartley 1-0-2-0; Wells-1-0-4-0.
Lancashire *KK Jennings, LWP Wells, JJ Bohannon, DJ Vilas, †PD Salt, GJ Bell, GP Balderson, TW Hartley, TE Bailey, WSA Williams, L Wood.
Toss Middlesex elected to bat.
Umpires NA Mallender and DJ Millns.

Warwickshire v Northamptonshire

Edgbaston Northamptonshire (0pts) lead Warwickshire (1) by 200 runs with five first-innings wickets remaining.

Northamptonshire First innings Close

H Azad c Miles b Rushworth	1
EN Gay c Burgess b Hannon-Dalby	77
***LA Procter** c Hain b Hannon-Dalby	5
KK Nair c Burgess b Barnard	78
RI Keogh b Hannon-Dalby	9
S Zaib not out	6
†LD McManus not out	10
Extras (b6, lb6, nb2)	14
Total (for 5, 73 overs)	200

Fall 5, 24, 171, 181, 182.
To bat TAI Taylor, SC Kerrigan, CJ White, BW Sanderson.
Bowling Hannon-Dalby 19-7-29-3; Rushworth 16-2-57-1; Miles 12-1-36-0; Barnard 15-4-36-1; Rhodes 9-2-26-0; Briggs 2-1-4-0.
Warwickshire KC Brathwaite, RM Yates, *WMH Rhodes, DR Mousley, SR Hain, EG Barnard, †MGK Burgess, DR Briggs, CN Miles, C Rushworth, OJ Hannon-Dalby.
Toss Warwickshire elected to field.
Umpires RJ Bailey and N Pratt.

Division Two (first day of four)

Glamorgan v Yorkshire

Sophia Gardens Yorkshire (2pts) lead Glamorgan (1) by 330 runs with seven first-innings wickets remaining.

Yorkshire First innings

A Lyth b McIlroy	49
FJ Bean c Ingram b Carlson	93
***Shan Masood** not out	113
JH Wharton lbw b McIlroy	3
GCH Hill not out	51
Extras (b5, lb8, nb8)	21
Total (for 3, 78 overs)	330

Fall 98, 225, 240. **To bat** †JA Tattersall, ML Revis, DM Bess, JA Thompson, BM Cliff, BO Coad.
Bowling McIlroy 17-5-41-2; Harris 15-0-80-0; Kellaway 7-0-21-0; Ul-Hassan 9-0-34-0; Gorvin 9-1-41-0; Carlson 21-1-100-1.
Glamorgan EJ Byrom, Z ul-Hassan, CA Ingram, SA Northeast, *KS Carlson, WT Root, †CB Cooke, BI Kellaway, JAR Harris, AW Gorvin, JP McIlroy.
Toss Yorkshire elected to bat.
Umpires PJ Hartley and M Newell.

Gloucestershire v Derbyshire

Bristol Gloucestershire (2pts) lead Derbyshire (2) by 333 runs with four first-innings wickets remaining.

Gloucestershire First innings

BG Charlesworth c Madsen b Reece	30
CDJ Dent c Guest b Reece	41
†JR Bracey b Dal	23
OJ Price not out	125
MAH Hammond c Guest b Brown	21
***GL van Buuren** b Dal	78
Zafar Gohar c Guest b Dal	0
EWO Middleton not out	0
Extras (b4, lb3, nb8)	15
Total (for 6, 83 overs)	333

Fall 80, 85, 128, 169, 326, 332.
To bat J Shaw, LA Charlesworth, DC Goodman.
Bowling Conners 17-2-68-0; Brown 10-0-62-1; Dal 16-4-42-3; Reece 11-2-31-2; Thomson 12-0-54-0; Watt 17-1-69-0.
Derbyshire HRC Came, LM Reece, †BD Guest, WL Madsen, *JL du Plooy, MJ Lamb, AK Dal, MRJ Watt, AT Thomson, PR Brown, S Conners.
Toss Gloucestershire elected to bat.
Umpires T Lungley and JD Shantry.

Sussex v Leicestershire

Hove Leicestershire (3pts) trail Sussex (1) by 194 runs with eight first-innings wickets remaining.

Sussex First innings

TGR Clark c Budinger b Wright	15
TJ Haines c Budinger b Currie	39
TP Alsop c Umar Amin b Scriven	10
***CA Pujara** c Ackermann b Salisbury	26
JM Coles c Currie b Salisbury	44
†OJ Carter c Ackermann b Currie	16
FJ Hudson-Prentice c & b Salisbury	65

Other results

Barnet 3 Altrincham 0; Bromley 4 Maidenhead Utd 1; Chesterfield 3 Dag & Red 1; Eastleigh 0 Gateshead 6; Fylde 0 Aldershot 2; Halifax 1 Southend 1; Kidderminster 1 Rochdale 1; Oldham 0 Dorking 0; Oxford City 5 Hartlepool 2; Wealdstone 2 Ebbsfleet Utd 1; Woking 1 Solihull Moors 1; York 2 Boreham Wood 2

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE NORTH
Alfreton 4 Boston Utd 0; Banbury Utd 3 Warrington Town 0; Bishop's Stortford 1 Darlington 0; Chester 2 Blyth 1; Curzon Ashton 0 Chorley 1; Gloucester 0 Farsley Celtic 1; King's Lynn 1 Southport 4; Scarborough 2 Brackley 1; Scunthorpe 1 Buxton 2; South Shields 2 Rushall 0; Spennymoor 2 Hereford 0; Tamworth 3 Peterborough Sports 0

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH
Braintree 1 Farnborough 1; Chippenham 0 Maidstone Utd 2; Dover 1 Weymouth 3; Havant & Waterlooville 1 Truro City 3; Slough 2 Aveley 0; St Albans 1 Dartford 0; Tonbridge 0 Taunton 3; Torquay 2 Chelmsford 1; Welling 0 Bath City 1; Weston-super-Mare 1 Hampton & Richmond 1; Worthing 1 Hemel Hempstead 1; Yeovil 3 Eastbourne Borough 2

SCOTTISH CHALLENGE CUP
Third round Annan 0 Peterhead 2; Arbroath 4 Inverness 2; Bala Town 0 Queen's Park 3; Coleraine 1 Hamilton 3; Cove Rangers 0 Montrose 2; Dumbarton 1 Kelty Hearts 3; Dundee United 3 Dunfermline 0; East Fife 2 Albion Rovers 1; Edinburgh City 1 East Kilbride 4; Greenock Morton 2 Elgin 1; Partick Thistle 2 Queen of the South 3; Raith 3 Cliftonville 0; University of Stirling 2 Airdrieonians 3

HIGHLAND LEAGUE
Formartine 5 Deveronvale 0; Huntly 4 Turriff Utd 2; Lossiemouth 1 Nairn County 4

LOWLAND LEAGUE
Caledonian Braves 1 Bo'ness Utd 2; Civil Service Strollers 3 Cumbernauld Colts 1; Cowdenbeath 2 Gala Fairydean 2; Edinburgh University 0 East Stirlingshire 3; Gretna 2008 0 Berwick Rangers 1; Heart of Midlothian B 3 Broomhill 2

WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
First qualifying round

Arsenal (0) **3** **Paris FC** (0) **3**
Russo 80 116, Beattie 90+6 — Bourdieu 56 57, Soyer 106
(aet; Paris win 4-2 on pens)

BIIK Kazygurt (2) **4** **Cliftonville** (1) **2**
Lungu 18 85 — Maxwell 45+1
Nurusheva 20, Gabelia 73 — Callaghan 68pen

Glasgow City (2) **3** **Gintra** (0) **0**
Lovera 1, Weir 29
Davidson 67

Shelbourne (1) **3** **Cardiff** (0) **0**
Murray 37 53, Moore 64

Vålerenga (1) **2** **Celtic** (1) **2**
Tvedten 5 — Loferski 9, Smith 116
Thorsnes 120+3pen
(aet; Vålerenga win 11-10 on pens)

Ajax 3 Dinamo-BGU 0; Anderlecht 0 Brann 3; Apollon Limassol 3 Samegrelo 0; Benfica 4 Riga 0; Brøndby 2 Minsk 1; Ferencvárosi 7 Spartak Myjava 0; Hajvalia 0 Fomget Gençlik 6; HB Køge 3 KÍ 1; Juventus 1 Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (aet; Eintracht win 5-4 on pens); Levante 2 Twente 3; Linköpings 3 Kryvbas 0; Lokomotiv Stara Zagora 0 Katowice 0 (aet; Katowice win 3-1 on pens); Mura 7 Ljuboten 1; Olimpia Cluj 0 Maccabi Kiryat Gat 0 (aet; Olimpia Cluj win 4-3 on pens); SFK 2000 5 Flora 3; Slovácko 3 Okzhetpes 0; Spartak Subotica 2 KuPS 1; Sturm Graz 0 Stjarnan 0 (aet; Stjarnan win 7-6 on pens); St Pölten 3 Paok 0; Vllaznia Femra 1 Valur 2; Vorskla Poltava 3 Osijek 0; Zürich 3 Birkirkara 1

FA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP
Blackburn 2 Sheffield Utd 1; Charlton 2 Watford 3; Crystal Palace 9 Durham 1; Lewes 0 Birmingham City 0; London City 1 Reading 1; Southampton 0 Sunderland 1

WELSH PREMIER LEAGUE
Aberystwyth 2 Caernarfon 4; Barry Town 1 Connah's Quay 4; Haverfordwest 0 Newtown 4; Penybont 0 Colwyn Bay 1

IRISH PREMIERSHIP
Carrick Rangers 0 Ballymena 1; Dungannon 3 Glenavon 1; Newry City 2 Glentoran 4

JJ Carson c Salisbury b Scriven **5**
A Karvelas c Ackermann b Salisbury **18**
HT Crocombe lbw b Salisbury **6**
JD Unadkat not out **3**
Extras (b1, lb6, w2, nb6) **15**
Total (72.1 overs) **262**
Fall 50, 60, 80, 103, 135, 179, 251, 259, 200.
Bowling Wright 15-1-50-1; Salisbury 17.1-2-73-5; Currie 12-2-58-2; Scriven 15-3-41-2; Ahmed 12-1-32-0; Ackermann 1-0-1-0.

Leicestershire First innings
RK Patel not out **36**
SG Budinger c Crocombe b Karvelas **0**
***LJ Hill** c Coles b Haines **11**
CN Ackermann not out **17**
Extras (b2, lb2) **4**
Total (for 2, 21 overs) **68**
Fall 10, 48. **To bat** Umar Amin, R Ahmed, †OB Cox, TAR Scriven, SW Currie, CJC Wright, MET Salisbury.
Bowling Unadkat 6-3-12-0; Karvelas 5-1-10-1; Hudson-Prentice 5-1-15-0; Haines 4-0-23-1; Crocombe 1-0-4-0.
Toss Leicestershire elected to field.
Umpires PK Baldwin and BJ Debenham.

FIRST UNDER-19 TEST (third day of four)
New Road England 174 (CA Vidler 5-49) and 363 (DCKelly 74no, BS McKinney 72, JK Denly 69; HD Weibgen 5-33). Australia 348 (HT Dixon 167, CN Frendo 56; EV Jack 4-62) and 191-2 (S Konstas 84no, HT Dixon 83). Australia beat England by eight wickets.

RACHAEL HEYHOE FLINT TROPHY
Pool stage

	P	W	L	T	NR	RR	Pts
Blaze	12	7	2	0	3	+0.58	**38**
Stars	12	6	5	0	1	+0.51	**31**
Vipers	12	5	4	1	2	+0.17	**28**
Sparks	12	5	4	1	2	0.00	**27**
Diamonds	12	5	6	0	1	-0.15	**25**
Sunrisers	12	4	5	0	3	-0.09	**24**
Thunder	12	2	4	2	4	-0.27	**22**
Storm	12	2	6	0	4	-1.22	**16**

Beckenham Stars 287 (AN Davidson-Richards 101, PJ Scholfield 56; G Ballinger 4-54). Blaze 171. Stars beat Blaze by 107 runs.
Chelmsford Sparks 227-8 (AJ Freeborn 107no). Sunrisers 228-6 (AD Carr 58, MK Villiers 56, G Scrivens 51). Sunrisers beat Sparks by four wickets.
Taunton Diamonds 281-3 (L Winfield-Hill 83, L Dobson 68no). Storm 250-7 (SN Luff 87, NAJ Wraith 61, FC Wilson 57). Diamonds beat Storm by 31 runs.

Rugby union

PREMIERSHIP CUP
Pool stage Ampthill 17 Newcastle 40; Coventry 28 Saracens 14; Exeter 75 Bristol 0; Gloucester 42 Nottingham 14; Harlequins 54 Hartpury 14; Leicester 50 Caldy 6; Sale 47 Bedford 12

NATIONAL LEAGUE ONE
Birmingham Moseley 21 Sedgley Park 44; Blackheath 27 Bishop's Stortford 31; Cinderford 23 Leicester Lions 17; Plymouth 54 Taunton 29; Richmond 24 Rosslyn Park 31; Sale FC 21 Darlington MP 28

NATIONAL LEAGUE TWO
East Barnes 59 Wimbledon 22; Bury St Edmunds 50 North Walsham 17; Canterbury 45 Tonbridge 19; Dorking 38 Worthing 10; Guernsey 36 Sevenoaks 27; Old Albanian 31 Henley 20; Westcombe Park 27 Esher 42.
North Billingham 20 Tynedale 17; Preston Grasshoppers 27 Fylde 41; Hull 25 Hull Ionians 30; Leeds 31 Otley 18; Lymm 41 Huddersfield 48; Sheffield Tigers 28 Sheffield 32; Wharfedale 19 Rotherham 34.
West Bournville 29 Dudley Kingswinford 22; Camborne 36 Redruth 29; Exeter University 68 Hornets 19; Loughborough Students 31 Hinckley 40; Luctonians 47 Old Recliffians 15; Newport 29 Chester 32

Rugby league

BETFRED SUPER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PD	Pts
Wigan	25	18	0	7	664	348	+316	**36**
Catalans Dragons	25	18	0	7	642	412	+230	**36**
St Helens	25	18	0	7	565	348	+217	**36**
Leigh	25	15	0	10	559	479	+80	**30**
Hull KR	25	14	0	11	521	486	+35	**28**
Warrington	25	13	0	12	571	486	+85	**26**
Salford	25	13	0	12	486	481	+5	**26**
Leeds	25	11	0	14	489	473	+16	**22**
Huddersfield	25	10	0	15	413	512	-99	**20**
Hull FC	25	10	0	15	444	572	-128	**20**
Castleford	25	6	0	19	317	680	-363	**12**
Wakefield	25	4	0	21	272	666	-394	**8**

Leeds 0 Wigan 50; Salford 24 Warrington 20.
Friday Castleford 29 Hull FC 12; Huddersfield 18 Hull KR 26; St Helens 22 Leigh 12; Wakefield 10 Catalans Dragons 18

BETFRED CHAMPIONSHIP
Barrow 32 Swinton 14; Batley 25 Whitehaven 12; Bradford 10 York 20; Halifax 26 Toulouse 18; London Broncos 52 Widnes 12. **Friday** Newcastle 22 Featherstone 56; Sheffield 38 Keighley 10

BETFRED LEAGUE ONE PLAYOFFS
Semi-finals Oldham 12 North Wales 13; Hunslet 14 Doncaster 26

BETFRED WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE
Group One Leeds 24 Wigan 0; St Helens 56 Warrington 6; York 60 Huddersfield 4
Group Two Castleford 4 Bradford 50; Featherstone 28 Salford 18; Leigh 12 Barrow 14

Cycling

TOUR OF BRITAIN
Stage eight (Margam – Caerphilly; 166.8km) **1** C Rodríguez (Sp) Ineos Grenadiers 3hr 52min 43sec; **2** W Van Aert (Bel) Jumbo-Visma +0:11; **3** D Howson (Aus) Q36.5; **4** T Halland Johannessen (Nor) Uno-X; **5** M Sheffield (US) Ineos Grenadiers all s/t.
General classification: 1 W Van Aert (Bel) Jumbo-Visma 28hr 43min 57sec; **2** T Halland Johannessen +0:03: **3** D Howson (Aus) Q36.5; **4** M Sheffield (US) Ineos Grenadiers both s/t; **5** M Donovan (GB) Q36.5 +0:23.

VUELTA A ESPANA
Stage 15 (Pamplona – Lekunberri; 156.5km) **1** R Costa (Por) Intermarche-Circus-Wanty 3hr 30min 56sec; **2** L Kamna (Ger) Bora-Hansgrohe; **3** S Buitrago (Col) Bahrain Victorious both s/t; **4** R Evenepoel (Bel) Soudal Quick-Step +0:02; **5** A Kron (Den) Lotto Dstny s/t.
General classification: 1 S Kuss (UA) Jumbo-Visma 54hr 38min 42sec; **2** P Roglic (Svn) Jumbo-Visma +1:37; **3** J Vingegaard (Den) Jumbo-Visma +1:44; **4** J Ayuso (Sp) Team Emirates +2:37; **5** E Mas (Sp) Movistar +3:06.

Golf

HORIZON IRISH OPEN (Straffan)
Leading final scores (GB/Ire unless stated) **274** V Norrman (Swe) 68 71 70 65. **275** H Long (Ger) 67 66 70 72. **276** S Lowry 68 68 72 68; T Lawrence (SA) 72 65 73 66; R Fox (NZ) 71 69 66 70; G Forrest 70 67 69 70.

WOMEN'S BIG GREEN EGG OPEN (Hilversum, Netherlands)
Leading final scores (GB/Ire unless stated) **204** T Cheenglab (Tha) 69 68 67. **205** N Broch Estrup (Den) 73 67 65; L Hall 69 68 68. **206** C Williams 68 69 69; S Kjellker (Swe) 67 70 69. **207** A Fanali (It) 70 71 66.

WOMEN'S QUEEN CITY CHAMPIONSHIP (Cincinnati, US)
Leading third-round scores (US unleess stated) **201** MJ Lee (Aus) 67 69 65. **203** C Hull (Eng) 67 68 68; Chien P (Tai) 66 64 73. **204** M Metraux (Swi) 68 66 70. **205** M Sagström (Swe) 69 68 68; Y Saso (Jpn) 69 66 70.

Tennis

US OPEN (Flushing Meadows, New York)
Men: Wheelchair singles: A HEWETT (GB, 2) bt G Reid (GB) 6-4 6-3.
Women: Singles: Final: C GAUFF (US, 6) bt A SABALENKA (Blr, 2) 2-6 6-3 6-2.
Wheelchair singles: Final: DE DE GROOT (Neth, 1) bt Y KAMIJI (Jpn, 2) 6-2 6-2.
Doubles: Final: E ROUTLIFFE & G DABROWSKI (NZ/Can, 16) bt L SIEGEMUND & V ZVONAREVA (Ger/Rus, 12) 7-6 (11-9) 6-3.
Mixed doubles: Final: A Danilina & H Heliövaara (Kaz/Fin) bt A KRAJICEK & J PEGULA (US, 1) 6-3 6-4.

Greg Wood's racing tips

Brighton **2.20** Free Step **2.55** Miguel **3.30** Line Of Fire **4.05** Control **4.40** Swing To The Stars **5.15** Lethal Angel **5.45** Run Cmc
Perth **2.30** Lord Sam's Castle **3.05** A Different Kind **3.40** Beauty To Behold **4.15** Rakhine State **4.47** Wasdell Dundalk **5.22** Headscarf Lil
Newton Abbot **2.40** Ya Know Yaseff **3.15** Way Out **3.50** Investment Manager **4.25** Slate Lane **5.00** Wilderness **5.35** Bradford Lady
Newcastle **4.55** Krona **5.30** Irv **6.00** Speed Court **6.30** Polly The Rocket **7.00** Aurora Glory **7.30** Show Compassion (nb) **8.00** Nazca **8.30** Glorious Rio (nap)

▼ *Wout van Aert (centre) celebrates a triumph he felt was drifting away*
SIMON GALLOWAY/PA MEDIA



Cycling Tour of Britain

Van Aert holds off Rodríguez charge to reclaim the title

William Fotheringham

Second place on the climbing stage into Caerphilly secured Wout van Aert his second overall title in the Tour of Britain. Compared with his 2021 victory, however, this was far from straightforward although his fine form had been clear from day one.

Through the hills of South Wales, Ineos's Spanish starlet Carlos Rodríguez, the eventual stage winner, formed an impromptu alliance with local rider Steve Williams to push Van Aert to the edge, in the first of the eight stages where the Belgian's Jumbo-Visma team were unable to exert any real grip on proceedings.

After Williams – who was guesting for Great Britain here – and Rodríguez had sprung clear on the climb of Bryn Du, high above Aberdare in the heart of the Rhondda, Van Aert's teammates had been scattered to the four winds on the high moorland and the two strongest climbers in the race were rapidly forging a healthy advantage ahead of a small chase group, Van Aert faced the prospect of losing the race lead he had taken in winning Thursday's stage into Felixstowe. "I had a really hard time, I didn't think it was possible to take the general classification."

The 28-year-old's only option was to remain calm and hope that enough of his teammates could battle their way up to him, and that they and other squads would take the strain before the race arrived at the final brace of climbs over Caerphilly Mountain in the last eight miles. "I tried to stay calm, as I knew there were two climbers in front, and they would spend a lot of energy getting to the finish circuit."

In the hiatus while he waited for Steven Kruijswijk and Nathan Van Hooydonck to catch up, Williams and Rodríguez raced into a lead that briefly exceeded 90 seconds.

With several other teams assisting Jumbo-Visma, the duo's lead evaporated like the puddles from the rain showers that had greeted the race when it entered the hills, and on reaching Caerphilly they were only a handful of seconds ahead.

The first climb of the mountain broke Williams, a 27-year-old from Aberystwyth who has quietly forged a good career racing for the Bahrain-Merida and Israel-Premier Tech team, and who this year had won the Arctic Race of Norway. Rodríguez forged ahead on his own, but although he has had an outstanding year with a stage win and fifth overall in the Tour de France, he was less of a threat to Van Aert, having lost time in a crash in the Cotswolds on Saturday's stage into Gloucester.

The Spaniard needed to finish 40sec ahead of Van Aert and his 20sec advantage with one 7km lap of the finish circuit put the race in the balance. With no teammates left at his side, the Belgian had to control the Spaniard's lead while simultaneously ensuring that he did not crack, and that he did not lose ground to three threats for the overall title: Rodríguez's Ineos teammate Magnus Sheffield, the Norwegian Tobias Johannessen and the Australian Damien Howson, all of whom were a slender 3sec behind him overall.

While Rodríguez did give the Ineos team a consolatory stage win after the withdrawal of their marquee rider Tom Pidcock on Saturday, he was only 11sec ahead of Van Aert on the line, giving the Belgian his third road race win of 2023. He has had a frustrating mid-season, and it was about time he got the rub of the green.

This was a fine crescendo to a slow-burning week marked by six mass finishes in the first six stages, with 52 riders level on time 3sec behind Van Aert after Friday's stage into Harlow, but it was far from plain sailing, with this most important climbing stage in effect split into two by a lengthy pause from racing with between 87km and 77km to go, when the race briefly stopped twice and then took a diversion to avoid a stretch of road which had been closed by an accident involving a motorcyclist. The incident was unrelated to the race, but it meant that the entire convoy had to be guided through back streets with racing neutralised and the bunch travelling at controlled speed.

Costa wins Vuelta stage 15

Rui Costa of Intermarche-Circus-Wanty won stage 15 of the Vuelta a España in a sprint finish yesterday, while defending champion Remco Evenepoel fell short in his valiant effort to continue his recovery from a meltdown earlier this week. Former world road champion Costa held off Lennard Kämna and Santiago Buitrago following the 158.5km ride from Pamplona to Lekunberri, as Evenepoel ended in fourth. American Sepp Kuss retained the leader's red jersey, with his Jumbo-Visma teammates Primoz Roglic and Jonas Vingegaard in second and third in the overall standings. Reuters



Southgate twice talked 'critical' Walker out of retirement

David Hytner

Gareth Southgate has revealed that he has twice needed to talk Kyle Walker out of international retirement – after the European Championship finals in 2021 and the World Cup last year.

Walker starred in England's 1-1 Euro 2024 qualifying draw against Ukraine on Saturday, scoring the equaliser – his first goal for his country at any level – and defending with supreme assurance, particularly against the pace of Mykhailo Mudryk.

It was his 77th senior cap and afterwards Jordan Pickford called him the best right-back in world football; the quickest, too. But Walker would not be enjoying another tournament campaign if it were not for the heart-to-hearts with Southgate.

"I've talked him [Walker] out of retirement twice," the England manager said. "After the Euros and after the World Cup. I think he loves being here, he's wanted to keep going and now he's thinking about how many caps he can get. He's critical to us."

Walker made his senior England debut under Fabio Capello as a 21-year-old in the 1-0 friendly win against Spain in November 2011. In the summer that year he had been in the Under-21s squad at the European Championship. In the summer of 2019 he was with the Under-19s at the European Championship finals.

Walker's England career looked to be over when he spent 15 months out of the team after the Nations League finals in June 2019. When he returned against Iceland in September 2020, he was sent off and suggested he really could be done. Southgate stood by him but after each of the previous two tournaments, Walker worried about the continued levels of sacrifice and the competition in his position from Trent Alexander-Arnold, Kieran Trippier and Reece James. "Obviously, in a moment, at the time that me and Gareth spoke, the likes of Trent, Tripps, Reece James coming through … you do think your days are numbered," Walker said. "I've been doing this since I was 19. I'm 33 now. Me and Gareth have a good relationship off the field. I feel that I can still bring something to the team. So why stop?"

Walker considered his club future at Manchester City over the summer and again had to be talked around by his manager. He was close to joining Bayern Munich, having agreed personal terms on a two-year deal, but Pep Guardiola offered him reassurances over dinner in early August. Walker has now agreed a new three-year contract at City.

Walker, who was outstanding against Kylian Mbappé in England's World Cup quarter-final defeat by France last December, played superbly against Vinícius Júnior in both legs of City's Champions League semi-final win against Real Madrid last season. He was devastated to be left out of the starting XI for the final against Internazionale, although he did come on as a late substitute in the 1-0 victory. After the injury to Kevin De Bruyne, Walker has been City's interim captain in the early weeks of this season and he hopes to be voted into the role full-time.

"Kyle has got better with age," Southgate said. "Not only playing but also around the training, the way I hear him speak when he's interviewed, his influence on the group, the younger players. He's become a really mature leader for us. I think he's enjoying the extra responsibility he's had at his club and I know he's ready to embrace that with us as well.

"Mudryk has not hit the heights yet in the Premier League [with Chelsea] but he's a bloody dangerous player. Kyle's ability to control those counterattacks was critical. It was his all-round game. He showed great composure in a position where you don't always find it."

Pickford said: "Kyle is the best right-back in the world. His pace against Mudryk, who is rapid … games against Mbappé, his defensive stuff. He has got to be the quickest, hasn't he? There is no doubt."

Southgate is looking forward to the friendly against Scotland at Hampden Park tomorrow and he said that the Football Association was still interested in securing the international allegiance of Elliot Anderson. The England-born Newcastle midfielder also qualifies for Scotland and he was given a first senior call-up by them for this window only to withdraw through injury. Southgate said: "He's definitely a player we like."



▲ *Kyle Walker is enjoying his status as an experienced England player*



Loyalty to pre-modern Maguire holds team back

Defender's possession is negative with a knock-on effect that had Jude Bellingham complaining

Barney Ronay



Most of the focus, post match, was on the hug. And in fairness, the hug was pretty funny. England will be happy enough with a forgettable night in Wroclaw: a point gained, the avoidance of injury, and a step closer to next summer's low-carbon tour of Germany, the first Euros to be scheduled in a way that minimises rather than maximises travel, a mild correction after the Platini-led cheap-flight madness of Everywhere 2020.

There weren't many highlights, or anything much to mark an evening characterised by a strange slackness at the heart of Gareth Southgate's team. But the hug was one of them. It came just before Ukraine's goal, product of a surgical counterattack down the left. As Yukhym Konoplya crossed, every England player seemed to be in a state of flux, spinning and twirling, looking for traction. Harry Maguire chose to make a run into the same space as Marc Guéhi and in the process ended up embracing his defensive partner, arms wrapped tenderly around Guéhi's torso, as behind them Oleksandr Zinchenko pinched the ball off the boot of Mykhailo Mudryk (generally speaking, a good option) and tucked the ball into the England net.

The hug was a funny detail. But it wasn't the headline note of Maguire's game, which was in turn also the story of England's night. Either side of the hug it was Maguire's low carbon footprint, his basic lack of mobility and foot-speed that created an obvious problem for England's positioning and forward movement; one that Southgate really should have weeded out by now.

Maguire doesn't deserve the abuse that comes his way. There is no lack of application here. He has fine qualities: calmness, heading the ball, defending in close-quarter duels. But he is also a pre-modern model of a central defender, a footballer whose chronic lack of agility provides referred pain in pretty much every position.

Harry-ball, then. Six times in the opening 90 seconds in Wroclaw Maguire took the ball as England's deepest player, and not just a little bit deeper but several yards behind the rest of the defensive line. The seventh time, having crept a little further upfield, he instantly fed the ball back to Guéhi behind him, always seeking that nothing space of dead defensive possession.

This was the pattern through the opening 20 minutes, Maguire always walking back before taking the ball, as he does automatically now, a function perhaps of always being the slowest player on any pitch, and in the process setting a pattern of sedentary, cautious recycling of the ball that England never quite shook off. Like an all-day weekend hangover.

Maguire has often been compared to a wardrobe: square, traditional, hard to shift. In this England team he functions more as a defensive sofa. Stationed back there a Maguire-led central defence becomes a place to rest, to zone out, to avoid the issues of the day. In Wroclaw England sunk into The Sofa from the opening minutes,



▲ *Harry Maguire bizarrely hugs Marc Guéhi as Ukraine score*

Rubiales finally quits
Spain football chief to resign after outcry over World Cup final kiss *News, Page 2* →

▼ *The referee shows Harry Maguire the yellow card in Saturday's draw*
MAJA HITIJ/GETTY



a state of ennui from which they were never able to fully emerge.

Maguire and Guéhi made 135 largely risk-free passes in the opening 38 minutes, completing 130 of them, as England idled around harmlessly in dead spaces. Possession football has always carried an idea of resting on the ball but this is simply too much, too much entropy, the kind of possession that lulls your own team to sleep. Watching it you wondered if England could be improved by putting Maguire in goal and playing Jordan Pickford in central defence, where he might at least add a little jittery forward energy.

This might seem harsh on Maguire. England were playing away from home. He is rusty. But that tendency towards ponderous possession has become a vice, and an issue for the rest of the team.

There are two parts here. Most obviously this is just not how modern elite football teams pass forward from the back. At Arsenal, Declan Rice often takes the ball in that position, allowing the centre-backs to split daringly, drawing the opposition press forward. At Manchester City, John Stones has basically become a midfielder, carrying the ball fearlessly into forward spaces whatever his starting position. Nobody here is dawdling, acting as a human baseball mitt, basically killing time, and in the process your own team's forward energy.

The second problem is the space Maguire opens up in his own team by standing so deep. This can be a very small thing, tiny margins of momentum, angles of passing. But any loss of intensity gives an opponent angles to pass, dilutes England's ability to counterpress high up the field, and leaves the midfielders looking oddly frantic, asked to cover too much ground.

This isn't hard to spot. At one point in the first half, Jude Bellingham could be seen shouting for his centre-backs to move higher up the pitch, to create a greater intensity in that area. Bellingham knows how an elite midfield should feel, where the spaces should be. And he was used badly in other ways against Ukraine, moved to the left side to accommodate Southgate's caution, with Jordan Henderson roaming in a narrow straight line on the right.

It felt like an odd way to use your best player. Bellingham has a genuinely rare blend of attributes, not least the ability to absorb a pass on the turn from any angle and surge into just the right open lane of space. Every part of the team should be configured with at least half an eye on making best use of this. Instead he spent a lot of time fighting for the ball in a midfield where England couldn't apply enough pressure, where the defence sat off in a cautious line, rather than offering overloads, extra bodies, extra options.

Stones, who does take chances and step forward into these spaces, could have offered an obvious upgrade. At moments such as these the contrast between his development over the past six years and that of his long-term England partner is painfully stark.

As ever, what Southgate does from here comes down to the balance of risk and reward, of loyalty to the tried and trusted versus the duty as England manager to those playing every week and seeking their own chance. For all the talk of a talent pathway England are on course to go to the European Championship finals with six, or possibly seven players from the 11 who played in the World Cup semi-final defeat to Croatia in 2018. This includes a starting midfielder currently operating as a deep-cover liberal morality agent in a developing league. And of course The Sofa, a centre-back who has started three club games since April.

The fact is England have other options in Maguire's position. Stones is a world-class footballer and a sure thing if he's fit. Guéhi played well in Poland and has great junior England pedigree. Lewis Dunk is an excellent defender in a tactically cutting-edge Premier League team. How bad could it be? Would anyone really begrudge the odd missed header in return for a much-needed surge in energy, mobility, passing skills, and the referred positives through the rest of the team?

Southgate was ruthless in cutting away the good old boys at the start of his time in charge. He has been impressively bold in giving young players a chance. For all the fond memories, the loyalties repaid, it is surely time once again to wield that scythe.

Flick sacked by Germany after Japan thrashing

Will Unwin

Germany have dismissed Hansi Flick as head coach after they were thrashed 4-1 by Japan in a friendly on Saturday night.

The country is set to host the European Championship finals next summer and the German Football Association (DFB) has deemed it necessary to act at this stage. Flick is the first Germany manager to be sacked since the role came into existence in 1926.

The former striker Rudi Völler, alongside Hannes Wolf and Sandro Wagner, will take charge for the friendly against France tomorrow.

Flick had survived a disappointing World Cup, where Germany were eliminated in the group stage, but things have not improved with the team failing to win any of their past five games. The former Bayern Munich head coach took training yesterday but was later relieved of his duties.



▲ *Germany won four of Hansi Flick's final 17 matches as head coach*

"The bodies [of the DFB] shared the same view that the national team now needs a new impulse," the DFB president, Bernd Neuendorf, said in a statement. "With next year's Euro in sight we need enthusiastic mood and confidence."

The 58-year-old left his role at Bayern in May 2021 to replace Joachim Löw with the national team, signing a three-year contract that was supposed to see him through to the end of Euro 2024, but after 12 wins in 25 matches Flick has departed. He had previously spent an eight-year spell as Löw's assistant, before joining Bayern in the same capacity until being promoted to head coach.

12
The number of victories
Germany had during Hansi Flick's 25 games in charge

Saturday night was not the first time Flick's Germany had lost against Japan in the past 12 months. They were defeated 2-1 at the World Cup in Qatar, eventually bowing out at the group stage on goal difference.

Things started well for Flick, winning his first eight games in charge but he followed that up with four victories in his final 17 matches at the helm, culminating in the latest humiliation by Japan.

The German FA said it is aiming to find a replacement as soon as possible. One potential candidate is Julian Nagelsmann, who replaced Flick at Bayern. He spent fewer than two years in charge at the Allianz Arena and is without a job but in the meantime Völler, who spent four years as Germany head coach at the start of the century, will lead the coaching staff.

"The most urgent thing is then to bring in a national team coach who at short notice can redirect and prepare our team for the big Euro tournament next year," Völler said. "We expect from them, as does the whole country, positive impulses. A coach who can lift our level to where we know and expect it to be."

Group D

Under-pressure Page insists he will see out Wales contract

Ben Fisher
Riga

Rob Page has reiterated his determination to see his out contract as Wales manager amid mounting pressure on him to keep his job. Page, who has three years remaining on the deal he signed before the World Cup, said he cannot afford to be distracted by the growing discontent among supporters before Wales's crunch Euro 2024 qualifier against Latvia. The Football Association of Wales has been reviewing Page's position after a poor run of results.

Realistically, Wales must win in Riga today to keep alive their hopes of automatic qualification from Group D. Latvia, ranked 134th in the world and are without a win in nine matches, are bottom after losing all four group games. Wales have also struggled for form and won one of their past 13 matches, a 1-0 victory over Latvia in March in Cardiff. Asked whether he feels pressure to qualify, Page replied: "I can't let that affect me. I can't think about that, I've got a job to do. I want to qualify for me, as a Welsh supporter myself, as the manager. I want to be in this job for the rest of my contract. I really enjoy working with this group of players.

"We're in an industry where you need to win games of football. We are in a transitional period as well. I can't influence what the board above and what everybody else does. All I can worry about is trying to win games of football and giving it my best shot. If I do that and it don't work out for me, at least I can walk away with head held high knowing that I've given it absolutely everything."

The Wales captain, Aaron Ramsey, insisted the mood in the camp is upbeat despite defeats to Armenia and Turkey in June fostering concern among the fanbase. "We have a good chemistry here," he said. "We know how much it means to everyone. Everyone is looking forward to this game. They're a physical team, a direct team and it's not always easy when you come off the back of a result, so we're expecting a response. We're going to have to show we can deal with it."

The 19-year-old Birmingham midfielder Jordan James could retain his place after impressing on his full debut against South Korea on Thursday, in which the Ipswich winger Wes Burns sustained a hamstring injury. Burns, the Nottingham Forest goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey, who is also short of fitness, and the suspended Joe Morrell and Kieffer Moore have not travelled.



▲ *Rob Page knows Wales must win in Latvia to retain qualification hopes*

Football In brief

Euro 2024 qualifying

Weghorst winner all but ends Republic's hopes

Cody Gakpo and Wout Weghorst effectively ended the Republic of Ireland's Euros qualification hopes as the Netherlands came from behind to win in Dublin. Ireland took an early lead when Adam Idah converted a fourth-minute penalty awarded for handball against Virgil van Dijk. However, Gakpo levelled from the spot after 19 minutes and the substitute Weghorst fired the visitors to a 2-1 victory. For the Republic, a fourth defeat in five Group B games means a trip to Germany next summer is only a mathematical possibility, with France on 15 points and the Dutch and Greece on nine. **PA Media**

Euro 2024 qualifying

Northern Ireland's pain continues in Kazakhstan

Northern Ireland's Euros qualifying misery continued as they fell to a 1-0 defeat to Kazakhstan in Astana. It was a fifth consecutive loss in this campaign, and the fourth time in the last five Michael O'Neill's injury-ravaged side have been unable to muster a goal. Kazakhstan won courtesy of Maksim Samorodov's 27th-minute strike."I think it followed quite a similar pattern for us," said O'Neill. "The goal in the game is the only defining moment. We started the game well, we were dominating but our play in the final third let us down." **PA Media**



▼ *Liam Livingstone scored 95 off 78 balls to rescue England's innings*
JAMES MARSH/SHUTTERSTOCK

Livingstone states his case to help England level series

Taha Hashim
Ageas Bowl

England were 55 for five, a fourth consecutive defeat against New Zealand on the cards, World Cup preparation looking a little bit all over the shop. And then came Liam Livingstone. The T20 star searching for 50-over success found joy as an inbetweener, hitting an unbeaten 95 in a 34-overs-a-side contest as England won the second one-day international by 79 runs.

Livingstone's innings headlined a total of 226 for seven after steady mizzle in Southampton delayed the start and forced a shortened contest, not ideal as both sides looked to cram in another ODI lesson before the major show next month. Two days on from his hundred in Cardiff, Daryl Mitchell and his heavenly straight drive briefly threatened for New Zealand but England's attack squeezed from the other end and levelled the series 1-1.

The early exchanges belonged to New Zealand, with Tom Latham choosing to bowl first and Trent Boult making the ball sing. This was Boult's 100th ODI but his first since last September, international appearances having dwindled since he gave up his central contract to take up the freelance beat and spend more time with the kids. New Zealand have preferred others ahead of him, including when England visited for a Test series this year, but a World Cup calls for your best. Yes, there is always another class quick opposite: take your pick from Tim Southee, Matt Henry, Lockie Ferguson and Kyle Jamieson. But Boult's left-arm mastery elevates him above the rest.

The 34-year-old struck with the first ball of his second over, helped by a leaping one-handed grab by Mitchell Santner at cover after a leading edge off Jonny Bairstow's bat. Two balls later there was greater hoop into the right-hander to trap the out-of-form Joe Root – a rarely used sequence of words – lbw for a duck. Henry nipped the ball in and then away from Ben Stokes but it was off Boult's bowling that the left-hander chipped to mid-off for one. Inside his first three overs, the fast bowler had startling figures of three for one, England just eight runs.

Dawid Malan was celebrating the birth of his son and Jason Roy's back was given a rest after he suffered a spasm earlier in the week, thus granting Harry Brook another World Cup audition at the top of the order – but he could muster only a 12-ball two. Jos Buttler saw things differently to the rest on a sticky surface, hitting three boundaries off one Boult over. He could not lead the rebuild, though, dragging a short Santner delivery on to his stumps to leave England five down.

Cue the arrival of Livingstone. This was a test for a powerful batter still waiting to play a one-day innings for England with a bit of depth and nuance. A 40-ball 52 in the previous match had been a fine contribution but here there was greater jeopardy and a need for more than just a quick fling. On 19 off 28, he attempted to greet the returning Boult with an ambitious leg-side swipe but only made contact with the air. A thump over extra cover for four to close the over was more like it.

"I don't think consolidation is a word we use in the dressing room," said Livingstone. "We've just got to see what we think is best for that situation. If in doubt, take the aggressive option."

There were deft touches to admire off Southee's bowling, a cover drive followed shortly by a carve behind point. But that trademark brawn was still present as Livingstone swung across the line to dominate the innings, his half-century off 47 balls progressing into a 78-ball 95. Moeen Ali's 33 and Sam Curran's 42 were crucial cameos, helping turn a rescue job into a genuinely competitive total.

David Willey went straight through Finn Allen with the second ball of the New Zealand innings, and Gus Atkinson nabbed his maiden ODI wicket with the dismissal of Devon Conway at the end of the ninth over. The left-hander tried a flairy punch but could only edge behind for 14. Willey was then quicker off his feet than Will Young, racing in from mid-off to pick up and throw down at the non-striker's end to leave New Zealand 55 for three inside 12 overs.

Mitchell kept the game running with a half-century but Reece Topley burst through New Zealand's middle order with three wickets in the space of two of his overs, and there wasn't to be any tail-end resistance. Willey finished with three of his own, Moeen counted Mitchell as his 100th ODI wicket and none of New Zealand's bottom six reached double figures.

Scoreboard

Ageas Bowl England beat New Zealand by 79 runs *(match reduced to 34 overs per side)*.

England		Balls	4s	6s
JM Bairstow c Santner b Boult	**6**	8	1	0
HC Brook c Allen b Henry	**2**	12	0	0
JE Root lbw b Boult	**0**	2	0	0
BA Stokes c Southee b Boult	**1**	10	0	0
***†JC Buttler** b Santner	**30**	25	4	0
MM Ali c Phillips b Southee	**33**	32	3	1
LS Livingstone not out	**95**	78	9	1
SM Curran c Boult b Southee	**42**	35	1	2
DJ Willey not out	**7**	2	0	1
Extras (b1, lb2, w7)	**10**			
Total (for 7, 34 overs)	**226**			

Fall 6, 6, 8, 28, 55, 103, 215.
Did not bat GAP Atkinson, RJW Topley.
Bowling Boult 7-1-37-3; Henry 7-0-42-1; Santner 7-0-38-1; Southee 7-0-65-2; Ravindra 4-0-32-0; Phillips 2-0-9-0.

New Zealand		Balls	4s	6s
FH Allen b Willey	**0**	2	0	0
DP Conway c Buttler b Atkinson	**14**	24	2	0
WA Young run out (Willey)	**33**	39	5	0
DJ Mitchell c Topley b Ali	**57**	52	6	1
***†TWM Latham** c Buttler b Topley	**19**	22	1	0
GD Phillips c & b Topley	**2**	4	0	0
R Ravindra c Root b Topley	**4**	2	1	0
MJ Santner c Bairstow b Ali	**4**	8	0	0
MJ Henry not out	**3**	3	0	0
TG Southee c Bairstow b Willey	**4**	3	1	0
TA Boult c Curran b Willey	**1**	2	0	0
Extras (lb2, w4)	**6**			
Total (26.5 overs)	**147**			

Fall 0, 49, 55, 111, 119, 123, 139, 140, 145.
Bowling Willey 5.5-0-34-3; Topley 7-0-27-3; Atkinson 5-0-23-1; Curran 4-0-31-0; Ali 5-0-30-2.
Toss New Zealand elected to field.
Umpires AT Holdstock (SA) and MJ Saggers (Eng).

County roundup

Robson clings on to give hope to Middlesex

Tanya Aldred
Old Trafford

Middlesex's last-gasp campaign to cling on to their Division One place had an apocalyptic start at Old Trafford. With the air as humid as an old dog's breath, Toby Roland-Jones won the toss, looked to the fretful skies and chose to bat.

As the stats floated about – this being the worst year for Middlesex's top five since 1894, and the worst year for any top five in the Championship since 1966 – so the heads started to roll. With four **Lancashire** players at slip, Mark Stoneman prodded at Tom Bailey, gone for a duck. Joe Cracknell drove at Will Williams and lost his bails. Jack Davies gloved a pull after a 33-ball four. Max Holden and John Simpson nicked behind. At 19 for five, it seemed the most catastrophic decision to bat first in Manchester since Kent decided to twist and take on Jimmy Anderson in July 2021.

But here came Sam Robson and Ryan Higgins – the only man to average over 35 for Middlesex this season – rebuilding hopes, brick by brick. Higgins hit the first boundary of the innings in the 20th over and Robson crafted his way to a 150-ball fifty. Robson was still there at stumps, despite rain, bad light and Tom Bailey.

At Canterbury, fellow relegation candidates **Kent** were flying thanks to a run-a-ball whizz-bang from Zak Crawley. Crawley, dropped on two before cracking four consecutive fours off one Brett Hutton over, slammed 158 from 153 balls.

Matt Salisbury grabbed five for 73 at Hove before Rishi Patel completed a thousand runs to keep **Leicestershire** in the promotion hunt; Shan Masood made an unbeaten 113 to put **Yorkshire** on top at Sophia Gardens; **Gloucestershire**'s Ollie Price made his third first-class hundred. And Olly Hannon-Dalby's three wickets kept the lid on a determined **Northamptonshire**.



▲ *Ryan Higgins on his way to a vital 41 for Middlesex against Lancashire*

Online now
Read Tumaini Carayol's report from last night's men's final *theguardian.com/sport*

How Gauff and her father plotted route to New York fairytale



▲*Coco Gauff celebrates her triumph with her parents and the trophy*
FREY/TPN/GETTY IMAGES

Teenager cut a forlorn figure in the spring but new coaches and a more aggressive style of play led to her first major

Tumaini Carayol
Flushing Meadows

Even as the WTA tour had shifted on to the European red clay season this year, Coco Gauff's favourite surface and the period that brought her first grand slam final at the French Open in 2022, the 19-year-old was struggling. During the early days of spring, Gauff had taken a few early defeats, culminating in a 6-3, 6-0 loss against Paula Badosa in Madrid.

A few days later Gauff, normally known for her toughness and fight, admitted she had allowed her frustration to consume her. "I mentally wasn't engaged in that second set," she said.

Things needed to change. As she travelled from tournament to tournament, the American spent much of her time interviewing prospective coaches, trying to find the right people to guide her through the next stage of her career. Still, the losses continued. She left Wimbledon deeply concerned after a first-round defeat against Sofia Kenin.

The most significant figure behind her success is her father, Corey. Off the court, alongside her mother, Candi, the Gauffs have nurtured an intelligent, kind and eloquent daughter, imbuing her with such strong inner self-belief that she has handled the difficulties of teenage fame incredibly well. Corey's work on the court as her primary coach has produced one of the best young talents of her generation.

There is no rule to parent-coaching relationships in tennis; some players enjoy success with their parents until the end. But for many others, there are critical moments when different, more qualified voices are necessary. With such strong emotional attachments involved, not everyone can come to the right decision to further their careers: now 25, six years older than Gauff, Stefanos Tsitsipas is still trying, and so far failing, to figure out if he should continue with his father as his coach after so long.

This year Corey Gauff made one of the most important decisions in his daughter's career. He knew exactly when it was time to take a step back and he helped her to find the right people with which to surround herself, hiring Pere Riba just before Wimbledon and Brad Gilbert afterwards.

"My dad is captain," Coco Gauff said to ESPN on Saturday. "He's the one who pushed me to bring Brad and Pere in. He's the one who said: 'It's time for a new change, I can't do it any more. Let's bring people in.' I didn't know BG – he's another generation – but he's helped me so much. Pere has helped so much. Different generations have pushed me to do well in this one."

Gauff had no idea where her father – no longer needed in her player box – was situated on Arthur Ashe Stadium throughout her US Open run.

He opted to sit in different boxes around the stadium or, such are his crippling nerves while watching his daughter play, he would pace on the tournament grounds outside. As she entered the crowd to find her family, though, he was the first person she reached.

Rather than any significant technical change, Gilbert has particularly stressed the importance of Gauff enjoying her time on the tour and the life she leads. While she has always been extremely self-assured for her age, the shift in her attitude, outlook and confidence has been clear throughout this summer.

The sixth seed's elevated confidence was as evident as she served out her first grand slam title to love without hesitation, as in her first-round match when her opponent, Laura Siegemund, continually stalled while Gauff was serving, prompting her to calmly express her frustrations. In the past, she may not have stood up for herself. "I really don't like confrontation all that much," she said.

This win has come with one crucial revelation for the American. After her difficult spring, Gauff felt she needed to transform her game, playing more attacking tennis from inside the baseline in order to win her first major. But she actually played her cleanest, most offensive tennis of the summer in Washington, her least significant title since Wimbledon.

In New York, Gauff scrapped through four three-set matches, recovering from a set down on three occasions. She problem-solved and each time, against players with completely different game styles, she found the right solutions. Faced with Aryna Sabalenka's heavy, relentless ball striking, Gauff had to rely on her incredible defensive skills, taking a step back and enraging the Belarusian by chasing down so many balls that no other player could reach.

Instead of transforming her game, Gauff learned that her existing strengths were sufficient. She is now a grand slam winner, the new world No 3 and she will also regain the No 1 ranking in doubles alongside her partner, Jessica Pegula. Yet, at just 19, she departs New York fully aware that she still has so much room to improve as she continues to develop her game and with the understanding that this is only the beginning.

Rugby league

Stone snatches Salford victory to strengthen playoff push

Salford	**24**
Warrington	**20**

Aaron Bower
AJ Bell Stadium

Salford moved level on points with sixth-placed Warrington after victory against the Wolves in the most dramatic of circumstances – as the race for a Super League playoff place heads into its final thrilling weeks.

Warrington knew victory here would open a four-point gap between themselves and Salford with just two rounds remaining. But the club who topped the table after 10 rounds look in danger of missing the playoffs, after Sam Stone's try in golden-point extra-time settled a pulsating game.

Salford and Warrington are now level on 26 points, with only points difference keeping the Wolves in the top six. The Red Devils are arguably favourites to usurp Warrington given the nature of this win, and the drop-off in the Wolves' form in the second half of this season.

"We've got belief in the club," the victorious coach, Paul Rowley, said. "Sometimes we're eager to please but we got the job done, but we had to work hard to win it more than once."

Salford led 12-6 at half-time with tries from Ben Hellewell and Brodie Croft, after Warrington had taken an early lead through Matty Nicholson's try. The quality was lacking from both sides, however, perhaps given what was at stake for each side.

"We lost some balls in crucial areas, we didn't handle it well and Salford did it better than us," Warrington's interim coach, Gary Chambers, said.

The lead changed hands three times after the break, first when Ben Currie touched down. Salford responded with Croft's second try before the Wolves went back ahead when George Williams scored. But a penalty from the boot of Marc Sneyd levelled it at 20-20 and took the game into golden-point extra-time.

It was decided in spectacular fashion. Salford broke out wide via Joe Burgess, who turned it inside for Stone to keep Salford's season alive.

Salford Brierley; Sio, Cross, Lafai, Burgess; Croft, Sneyd; Singleton, Ackers, Ormondroyd, Hellewell, Stone, Atkin. **Interchange** Vuniyayawa, Dixon, Addy, Bourouh.
Tries Hellewell, Croft 2, Stone. **Goals** Sneyd 4.
Warrington Dufty; Thewlis, Mata'utia, Ratchford, Ashton; Williams, Drinkwater; Mikaele, Walker, Vaughan, Currie, Nicholson, Harrison. **Interchange** Kasiano, Dudson, Clark, Crowther.
Tries Nicholson, Currie, Williams. **Goals** Ratchford 4.
Referee L Moore.



▼ Ben Earl reacts after England win a penalty following a scrum
DAN MULLAN/GETTY IMAGES

Old-school win must be start of red rose revival

Ford's drop goals and a solid defensive display have given England fans hope - now for the team to play even better

Robert Kitson
Marseille

It is amazing the difference one decent result can make. On the train south from Paris on Saturday, the carriages had been packed with pessimistic England fans bracing for more trouble and strife. Suddenly every single one of them is cheerfully contemplating potential quarter-final opponents and daring to believe a rousing red rose renaissance is materialising beneath a clear blue Mediterranean sky.

Let's just say that was not the universal mood in the immediate aftermath of Tom Curry's red card when every white-shirted supporter will have had a familiar sinking feeling. World Cups can be shaped fundamentally by the tiniest of misjudgments and here, apparently, was another classic case study. What all concerned, including Argentina, underestimated was England's resolution and desire to stand up and fight rather than bow to the supposedly inevitable.

England are yet to score a try at this World Cup but, for the moment, that is relatively unimportant. Of more immediate relevance is the sense of a corner having finally been turned and the smile that, for the first time in ages, spread across the relieved face of their head coach, Steve Borthwick.

It does not mean England are instantly poised to win the tournament, but the release of pressure is practically tangible. Beat Japan in Nice on Sunday and their place in the last eight will be in effect booked, with all that August angst receding in the rear-view mirror. They have also made many of their rivals sit up and take note of their old-school use of drop goals. As with vinyl records and your dad's old clothes, they're back in vogue, baby.

Listen, for example, to Ben Earl, the epitome of a modern-day rugby athlete, on how he felt, as part of England's seven-man pack, hearing the roars that greeted George Ford's fusillade of drops, the most successful exhibition of its kind at a World Cup since Jonny Wilkinson kicked three to beat France in Sydney in 2003. "I don't think I saw a single drop goal … my face was in the turf every time, but it was so nice," said the Saracens flanker, among the game's three busiest tacklers alongside his clubmates Jamie George and Maro Itoje.

Ford, meanwhile, also revealed the squad had been amused to learn that, until now, Danny Care was their most prolific Test drop-goal merchant. "I thought: 'That's not right, I need to put an end to that.'" With the tournament balls flying slightly further in the warm French air, the Sale fly-half was smart enough to employ the tactic and catch Argentina visibly off guard. "It's such a crucial and critical weapon at times … you have seen how influential they have been at World Cups.

"The thing with drop goals is doing them when the opposition least expect it. If you try and disguise it you give yourself a little more time and space."

> ***This effort ranked up there with England's most memorable World Cup pool wins***

Which is essentially what England now have in Pool D. No longer are the Japan and Samoa games freighted with quite as much anxiety, although the players were quick to stress this is not the moment to relax. "That can't be us peaking; that has to be the base level and we have to push on from there," Itoje said. "This is a step forward but we're not going to get ahead of ourselves. We know there's a lot more work to do."

The other self-evident truth is England's tendency to lift their intensity the more their options shrink. Keeping it simple and reducing everything down to its basics seems to make them feel more secure, even if Argentina's performance fell way below the standard required at this elite level.

"When you go down to 14 men - and we've been down to 14 men a bit too often in recent times - you have to fight and work," Itoje said. "If you don't, the other team will pick you apart. We had the belief in our team that, regardless of how many men we had, we will see it through."

Curry's disciplinary hearing will be interesting, with numerous voices across the rugby spectrum suggesting he had been harshly treated. It could yet develop into another test case for rugby's "bunker review" initiative - or the "bonkers review system", as some social media wags are dubbing it - with the Argentina fly-half Santi Carreras receiving only yellow for what appeared, in slow motion, to be a worse challenge on Ford.

Official efforts are already being made to improve matchday access for spectators following the concerning scenes outside the stadium's main entrance that resulted in many ticket holders missing the start of the game on Saturday. No one, thankfully, was seriously injured in the crush but this is clearly not a time or a place for complacency. Which is precisely what Borthwick and his coaches will be reminding his players as England head back north to their Le Touquet base for a few days - a convoluted itinerary in anybody's language - before returning to Nice on Thursday.

In some respects this backs-against-the-wall effort ranked up there with England's most memorable World Cup pool wins, a timely reminder they still possess good players who can step up when *les frites* are down. For all the retro 2003 chat, though, drop goals alone will not win this particular World Cup and every self-respecting team possesses character in adversity. While they survived the Curry takeaway on Saturday night, it was just the hors d'oeuvre. Ford has infused his side with fresh belief but their focus must now turn to playing even better.

Safety concern
World Rugby apologises for crowd chaos

Gerard Meagher

Organisers of the Rugby World Cup have apologised to fans caught up in the chaotic scenes outside the Stade Vélodrome before England's match against Argentina on Saturday night.

Thousands of ticket holders missed the start of the Pool D opener because of the limited number of entry points and turnstiles, insufficient staffing levels and extensive security checks. The weight of numbers led to crushes outside the ground and while France 2023 announced there were no incidents, and all 63,118 seats were eventually taken, many supporters were concerned for their safety amid the potential for the situation to escalate.

"Fans are the heartbeat of the tournament and we would like to apologise to fans impacted by yesterday's access challenges," a statement read. "We are working hard to enhance the experience for all visiting Marseille for Rugby World Cup 2023."

Organisers have stated there will now be more service volunteers in place to assist with entry as well as increased announcements on public transport, including in English. Other measures are also being taken to sure there is not a repeat of the scenes that took place before England beat Argentina 27-10 in the opening match of Pool D.

Although the crowds were well behaved and the atmosphere respectful, many supporters feared the consequences if the crushes intensified. "When we got out of the station at the stadium there was an overwhelming number of people as there are just two entry points," said England supporter Tim Chamberlain. "It felt like there were just not enough turnstiles and not enough people working. We stood in the melee for 45 minutes and it was really hot.

"You could see when we got in that it was potentially dangerous and there were occasional crowd surges, which were worrying, but people were generally pretty respectful."

It was only last year that French authorities came in for enormous criticism for the manner in which supporters were treated during the Champions League final between Liverpool and Real Madrid in Paris.

Curry to learn fate over World Cup suspension after red card

Continued from back page

happens it's always, 'This is the worst ever, everything has to change.' But you've got to burn the ships. Then all you can do is double down."

Curry, meanwhile, will learn whether he is suspended and for how long at a disciplinary panel tomorrow after he became the fourth England player to be shown a red card in six matches – even if Freddie Steward's against Ireland during the Six Nations was eventually rescinded.

Curry was making his first appearance for England under Borthwick and playing in his first match since May, having sustained an ankle injury over the summer. But in the third minute the open-side flanker made an upright tackle on Argentina's full-back, Juan Cruz Mallía, who was just landing with the ball after gathering a kick.

As was the case with Owen Farrell and Billy Vunipola, Curry was initially shown a yellow card which was upgraded to red via the new bunker review system. In a similar incident during his side's defeat by Japan yesterday the Chile captain, Martín Sigren, was shown a yellow card which was not upgraded. Later in the day, Jesse Kriel made direct contact with Jack Dempsey's head in a tackle during South Africa's win against Scotland, also in Marseille. It was similar to Curry's challenge but, in this case, was not looked at by the television match official.

"It's tough isn't it? The ref made his decision," Genge said of Curry's sending-off. "He referred it and the TMO in the box thought it was a red. As he's landing, kick-chasing, it's a split-second thing. He didn't mean to do it and there was no malice in it. I don't think he meant to hit him but it's one of them and you have to adapt."

Ben Earl, who along with Courtney Lawes, shone in England's depleted back-row believes Curry was "unlucky" to see his yellow card upgraded. If the sending off is upheld, Curry can expect a ban of three weeks, reduced to two if he attends "tackle school".

Earl said: "Obviously gutted for Tom. I didn't feel there was any malice in that challenge. I thought he was quite unlucky. Hopefully that works out but overall we're really pleased with how we bounced back.

"We've spoken a lot about the difference between playing in a World Cup and playing in warm-up games, the autumn nations series or even the Six Nations. Obviously we all want to win as many games for England as we can but you don't win anything in the summer. You start winning stuff now. We're starting to show we're not just going to roll over in those situations.

"Some teams might and sometimes in the Premiership losing a player of Tom's calibre is a deciding factor. We're starting to really find a way to win which is really pleasing."


Tom Curry can expect a ban of three weeks if his red card is upheld

Case for the defence
Ford's masterclass will give Borthwick a headache when Farrell is available

Nick Evans



George Ford's masterclass at fly-half against Argentina is going to give Steve Borthwick a selection headache when Owen Farrell comes back from suspension, because his 27-point haul was the best performance I've seen from him for either club or country. It's a nice headache to have and beating Argentina gives Borthwick the breathing space to nail down his selection at fly-half during the rest of the pool stage but it is a decision to be made nonetheless.

Part of the reason is that Manu Tuilagi and Joe Marchant were so effective together in the centres and as England have been craving cohesion in midfield, I wouldn't be tinkering with that part of the team. Manu may not have seen the ball as much as he'd have liked but he brings that focal point and defensively he was excellent. And Marchant is your engine in midfield, with great work-rate and an ability to make really important covering tackles.

To look at Ford's performance in a bit more detail, as a fly-half, whenever you lose a forward to a red card, it affects your systems from an attacking point of view. You have one less forward spread across the field so there's an adaptation on the shapes you need to run. What Ford did brilliantly is that he twigged so early on that forwards have a certain energy level and they expend it because they need to scrum, they need to execute the lineout, maul, tackle, carry and ruck and when there's only seven of them it's an extra five to 10 minutes' work, which is hard graft.

As a result, energy conservation of the forwards is extremely important. Ford kicked early in phases and he did not veer away from the plan. Having someone like that to make the right decisions at the right time, staying cool under pressure, sticking to the kicking strategy that was working, is so valuable. And what really impressed me with the kicking strategy was that very rarely did they go to Emiliano Boffelli. They targeted both Santiago and Mateo Carreras and they dominated the kicking contest, giving them the opportunity to get the ball back, move it and force Argentina into giving up penalties. I honestly don't think we'll ever see Argentina play that poorly again but all credit to England for making that happen.

It's a tight squad that England have, we've picked away at the things that have gone wrong but they've stuck together and they didn't panic. Then you rely on game leaders like Ford, I thought Alex Mitchell did really well too. It would have been easy for him to come in and want to try and push things but he looked to take opportunities when they were on offer and gave Ford the time and space he needed as well.

Once they started to get the scoreboard ticking over, that pressure becomes a factor. Ford understands that and when you get in that situation you take yourself out of the team environment and he grabs hold of the game by the scruff of the neck and says to himself, "I know what I need to do and everyone needs to back the choices that I make", and he just sat in the pocket and pulled the strings like a master.

He finished the match with three drop goals and I think it is the hardest skill in rugby. It is such a difficult skill to execute. Just watch his technique, especially the first one – a short backlift, crisp connection and a straight follow through. All of a sudden England were 9-3 ahead and Argentina became twitchy.

Knowing Steve and how meticulous he is in his planning, drop goals are something the coaches and players would have spoken about. This wasn't a knockout match but it was the next best thing for England and the World Cup is about winning, not about pleasing the crowd. Drop goals can be a very effective way to do that.

Across the whole game, the most impressive thing was the defensive performance with 14 men for so long. Kevin Sinfield did a brilliant job in preparing the players. They were aggressive, there was total alignment, they took away time and space from Santiago Carreras at No 10 and they gave the Argentinian forwards nothing. The adjusting tacklers were slowing the ball down, there were no quick rucks for Argentina to attack from.

I loved working with Kev. As a human being he's inspirational but the relationships he has with the players is fantastic. His knowledge as well – coming from rugby league he has an ability to transfer his thoughts and principles on defence from a league background and combine it with his knowledge of union structures.

What I found was his ability to get the guys to work hard for him. Get the guys to believe what he's about as a person and his systems and structures as well. I'm really happy for him because that performance was a long time coming and he should take a lot of pleasure from that.



'Ford's 27-point haul was the best performance I've seen from him for club or country'

◀ *George Ford's technique was exceptional with the drop goal one of the hardest skills to execute*
NICOLAS TUCAT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Wales survive Fiji fightback and dramatic finale to secure victory

Wales	**32**
Fiji	**26**

Michael Aylwin
Stade de Bordeaux

An extraordinary match that so nearly produced a denouement to die for. Fiji, fitter than they have ever been, stretched Wales to the very end, only for Semi Radradra to spill a bouncing ball with the line at his mercy, the clock in the red. What a comeback it would have been, Fiji down by 18 points with 14 to go. And popular. How popular.

In the end, Wales's nous, so used to an old-world status in rugby terms well above that of Fiji, saw them through. They have suffered their own trials of late, finding themselves three places below the Islanders in the world rankings, but their four tries left Fiji with just too much to make up. After England's riposte to the doubters, this bonus-point win was a further fillip for Britain's ailing powers.

"I'm delighted with the result," said Warren Gatland. "Everyone expected Fiji to win. They're a quality team, but we looked comfortable after 65 minutes. But Fiji can hurt you. I thought we showed a lot of courage."

These days it's hard to know how seriously to take the latest world rankings. Here we had the unfamiliar concept of Fiji in seventh, lording it over multiple "Tier 1" teams, including the opposition, Wales, in 10th.

Certainly, if set-piece solidity and basic physicality were any gauge, there was little to choose between the sides. It was in both midfields that the naivety was exposed. Wales took the early lead. After a penalty by Dan Biggar, George North was sprung through the midfield in the seventh minute. Smooth hands by Biggar and Liam Williams sent Jack Adams over for the game's first try.

Fiji did not panic. Waisea Nayacalevu scooped up a loose ball in midfield and cruised easily through to the line. In the 17th minute, Fiji were over again. Same route but more elaborately constructed. Nayacalevu made a half-break to put through Radradra. He probably could have blasted his way through the last defender, but he chose instead to lay on the scoring pass to Lekima Tagitagivalu.

Wales were far from dominant, but they were efficient in their points gathering. Another Biggar penalty followed, before North scored their second, put through that midfield again by his partner in the centre Nick Tompkins, earning Wales an 18-14 lead they would take to the break.

The test confronting Fiji became all the more severe within 10 minutes of the restart. That midfield again. This time Tompkins burst through it from a scrum on halfway, precipitating a



▲ *Louis Rees-Zammit crosses the line to score Wales's third try*

mad interchange between Adams and Williams down the left. When the ball was sent right, Louis Rees-Zammit had time to gather and sprint to the corner. Biggar converted from the touchline.

Fiji had to respond. A couple of penalties secured them position for a prolonged assault on Wales's line around the hour mark. Fiji sent wave after wave of fearsome carriers at the line, but by fair means or foul, Wales absorbed them. Finally, Fiji knocked on over the line. That seemed their moment.

Even more so, when all the worst suspicions of old-world bias bubbled up next. Having failed to reach for his pocket despite all those penalties Wales had just conceded on their line, the referee showed Fiji yellow at the very next offence, Tagitagivalu singled out. Wales kicked the penalty to the corner and had little trouble driving Elliot Dee to the line against the depleted Fiji pack.

"It's pretty tough to talk when you're hot after the match," said Simon Raiwalui, Fiji's coach. "The referees have a tough job, but as a coach you're just looking for that consistency."

For neutrals it left a sour taste in the mouth, but those in red shirts were jubilant enough. Even when Wales were finally shown a yellow minutes later, Corey Domachowski the culprit, it mattered little to them with such a lead and less than a quarter of an hour to play.

Fiji were not finished. They went for the corner again to set up another siege. This time they did manage to scramble over, Josua Tuisova's muscularity too much for Wales to hold.

There were seven minutes to play, but those neutrals bayed in fury as Wales took an age to restart, and then again to take the next lineout. Old-world tricks adroitly played.

But Fiji burst clear down the right to set up more pressure. Peni Ravai thought he had bundled his way over but was denied by a double movement. No matter, his fellow prop Mesake Doge succeeded two minutes later to pull Fiji back to within a score with 90 seconds left.

Incredibly, it seemed as if they might complete the comeback, but Radradra just could not gather the final pass. If he had, no one could have complained.

Wales
L Williams; Rees-Zammit, North, Tompkins, Adams (Dyer 59); Biggar (Costelow 67), G Davies (T Williams 51); Thomas (Domachowski 63), Elias (Dee 53), Francis (Lewis 63), Rowlands, Beard (Jenkins 59), Wainwright (Thomas 70), Morgan (c), Faletau (Reffell 59)
Try Adams, North, Rees-Zammit, Dee
Con Biggar 3 **Pen** Biggar 2
Sin-bin Domachowski 67

Fiji
Droasese (Maqala 75); Ravutaumada, Nayacalevu (c), Radradra, Habosi (Tuisova 53); Tela, Lomani (Kuruvoli 53); Mawi (Ravai 57), Matavesi (Ikanivere 67), Tagi (Doge 67), Nasilasila, Cirikidaveta (Mayanavanua 70), Tuisue (Botia 59), Tagitagivalu, Mata
Try Nayacalevu, Tagitagivalu, Tuisova, Doge
Con Lomani 2, Tela
Sin-bin Tagitagivalu 65

Referee Matthew Carley (Eng) **Attendance** 41,274



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▲ *George North evades Frank Lomani's tackle to score Wales's second try in their narrow win against Fiji*
ASHLEY WESTERN/COLORSPORT/SHUTTERSTOCK

Pool D

Fakatava and Japan surge back to ruin Chile's debut

Japan	**42**
Chile	**12**

Japan ran in six converted tries as they kicked off their campaign with a bonus-point win against the tournament debutants Chile, who got two tries of their own in searing heat.

After opening the scoring through a Rodrigo Fernández try, the South American team, the lowest ranked at this World Cup, added another from Alfonso Escobar with Santiago Vila slotting over the conversion.

Japan made the most of Chile's two yellow cards to prevail with two tries by Amato Fakatava and more from Jone Naikabula, Michael Leitch, Ryoto Nakamura and Warner Dearns, all six converted by Rikiya Matsuda.

Chile made a spirited start and scored a try in the sixth minute. The full-back Iñaki Ayarza broke through two tackles to set up the opportunity but the captain, Martín Sigren, looked to have spoilt it when the ball was knocked out of his hand in the tackle. But it went backwards and the fly-half Fernández pounced on the loose ball, dribbling it forward and then diving on it to score.

Chilean euphoria lasted less than 120 seconds as they dropped the ball from the kick-off, allowing Japan to score as the lock Fakatava burst through and sprinted away from the defenders for a quick reply.

Basic errors betrayed Chile's naivety and a late tackle from Matías Dittus on Koo Ji-won meant a 10-minute spell in the sin bin, during which time Japan took the lead on the half-hour as the winger Naikabula stretched over for their second try.

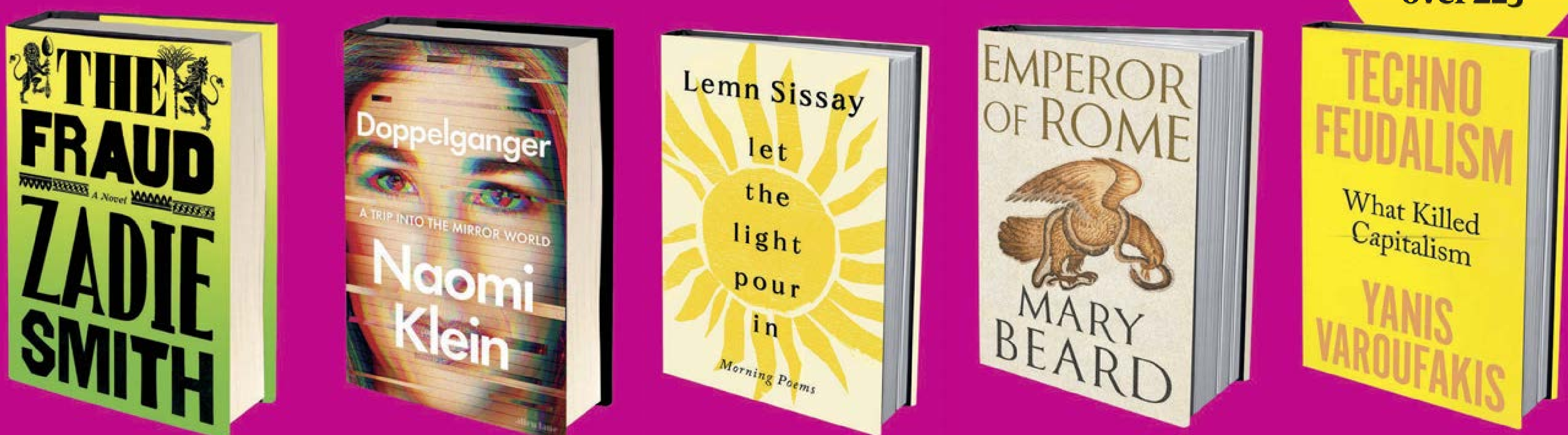
Sigren was also cautioned after head contact in a tackle on Kotaro Matsushima and with the numerical advantage Japan were able to maul over on the stroke of half-time as Fakatava claimed his second try and stretched the lead to 21-7.

But if it was expected the second half would signal the end of the rookies' resistance, the opposite was true as Escobar burst over to cut Japan's lead to nine points. That was as good as it got for Chile, with Leitch scoring Japan's fourth try in the 53rd minute, Nakamura scoring the next and Dearns stretched over at the end of the game. **Reuters**

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Kriel escape helps Springboks grind down Scotland

South Africa	18
Scotland	3

Robert Kitson
Stade de Marseille

South Africa are not the defending world champions by accident. After the first 40 minutes Scotland could still glimpse the high road to qualification in Pool B, only to be brought back down to earth with an audible thud. Teams who cannot take all their chances and secure a reliable supply of set-piece ball will be ground down by this Springbok side sooner or later.

If the Boks wobbled at times in the opening 40 minutes it was a very different story after the interval, with two tries inside four minutes from Pieter-Steph du Toit and Kurt-Lee Arendse in the third quarter ultimately keeping the fading Scots at arms length. One long-range Finn Russell penalty was all they could muster against the most formidable defensive side in the tournament.

Gregor Townsend was suitably downcast afterwards, bemoaning his side's lack of lineout accuracy and an early non-decision that might have reshaped the narrative. Jesse Kriel's upright tackle on the Scotland number eight Jack Dempsey inside the first minute of the game appeared to meet the potential red card threshold but the incident was not brought to the attention of the match officials.

Townsend was among those who thought it should have been. "I was expecting the TMO to come in to make the referee aware of that," he said, suggesting more needs to be done to improve the consistency of tackle height outcomes in major high-profile games. "There's still inconsistencies in seeing these things," he said. "We're obviously frustrated with that but we're more frustrated with our own performance. We never got the accuracy to really trouble them on the scoreboard. Credit to South Africa's defence but we have to be much better there."

Costliest of all, perhaps, were the lineout glitches that repeatedly cost Scotland in their opponents' 22 and the first-half moment when Darcy Graham, with two men outside him, clung on to the ball with the try line beckoning. While they trotted in at half-time just 6-3 down having applied some genuine pressure to the South African scrum, it was all downhill for the Scots thereafter.

If South Africa were not as impressive in attack as they were against New Zealand at Twickenham last month, they remain as hard to break down as ever. At first glance their peppermint-and-white kit diluted some of their aura but their steely determination to regain their title is visibly unchanged.

Here was further evidence that stopping them from reaching the final will require something special. On a road outside the ground before kick-off, in front of the traffic, was a unicyclist juggling knives with a ball balanced on his head. It was a decent metaphor for the multi-dimensional task facing the Scots, who also have to battle their way past Ireland, the world's top-ranked side.

Russell tried his hardest in the first half to stretch the Boks from side to side like a giant piece of elastic but the finishing touches proved elusive. The early departure of Eben Etzebeth, with a shoulder injury did rob South Africa of one of their enforcers and when Sione Tuipulotu ran straight over Manie Libbok, it seemed the Scots might be gathering some momentum.

Even better was to follow when the Scottish scrum cranked up the pressure on their opposite numbers and the formidable Frans Malherbe was forced to the floor. Russell, previously penalised for a no-arms tackle on Arendse, nailed the penalty from 45m and Scotland dared to dream.



▲ *Jesse Kriel's challenge on Jack Dempsey went unpunished*

South Africa needed some kind of second-half response and it duly materialised. First Du Toit was driven over beneath of pile of bodies and, within four minutes, a glorious no-look cross-kick from Libbok was taken in his stride by a sprinting Arendse who burned off the cover to score his side's second. From that moment there was never much chance of a Scottish miracle. "I was proud of how we fronted up physically but our accuracy wasn't quite there," admitted their captain Jamie Ritchie.

"These are things that are in our control and we need to fix. But as a group we've still got a lot to play for in this group. The good stuff we've done in the last few months hasn't gone away."

The Boks will clearly be monitor-

Powerful start to Boks' defence

Kurt-Lee Arendse is tackled by Duhan van der Merwe during South Africa's opening victory
DAVID ROGERS/ GETTY IMAGES



ing Etzebeth's fitness closely but, despite their slightly sluggish start, their head coach Jacques Nienaber sounded relatively content with the mega pool showdown against Ireland just over the horizon on Saturday week. He also insisted the South African coaches' use of traffic light-style colour-coded signals during the game were merely designed to relay injury updates rather than tactical information from the stands. "Sometimes it's difficult for us to talk to our support staff," he said, referencing the high noise levels in the stadium. "I am sure a lot of teams will have systems so they can communicate. I don't think you need any permission from World Rugby." The Boks are currently sending out a stream of crystal clear messages, on and off the field.

South Africa
Willemse; Arendse, Kriel, De Allende, Kolbe; Libbok (Le Roux 69), De Klerk (Williams 75), Kitshoff (Nche 53), Marx (Mbonambi 47-53, 58), Malherbe (Nyakane 53), Etzebeth (Snyman 26), Mostert, Kolisi (capt; Van Staden 65), Du Toit, Wiese (Vermeulen 60)
Tries Du Toit, Arendse
Con De Klerk **Pens** Libbok 2

Scotland
Kinghorn; Graham (Smith 67), Jones, Tuipulotu (Redpath 67), Van der Merwe; Russell, White (Price 67); Schoeman (Bhatti 56), Turner (Cherry 56), Z Fagerson (Nel 56), R Gray, Gilchrist (Cummings 56), Ritchie (capt), Darge, Dempsey.
Pen Russell

Referee Angus Gardner (Aus) **Attendance** 63,566



Analysis
Andy Bull *Stade de Marseille*





◀ Scotland (in blue) and South Africa get to grips with each other in their hard-fought encounter
CHRISTOPHE SIMON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Russell and co try to take on Springboks at their own game with the predictable ending

It must be something about Marseille. For the second day running the city hosted a right rough-and-tumble game of rugby. It looked, for long stretches, less like a match than something dark going on down a back alley after hours in the old port, the sort of thing which you might cross the street to avoid. At one point it really did break out into a fight, when Ben White bundled Damian de Allende into touch and everyone came wading in after them. The Scotland captain, Jamie Ritchie, raced across to make his point and suddenly found himself in the unfortunate position of having to square off against Eben Etzebeth.

Ritchie is 6ft 3in and 17st, but Etzebeth still towers overs him. He fixed him by the scruff and shot him the sort of malicious grin he might give a cow he was planning to eat for dinner later that evening. Ritchie, to be fair to him, glared back like he wanted Etzebeth to know he was welcome to try. Brave as it was, the moment rather summed it all up. It felt very much like Scotland got sucked into trying to play South Africa at their own game, which, just look at the size of them, was only ever going to be a mistake.

There were casualties. Etzebeth himself went off soon after, replaced by RG Snyman, who has the general mien of a man who cooks himself two Ali Prices for breakfast most mornings. Jesse Kriel collided head-first with Jack Dempsey and was damn lucky to escape without any penalty at all, Finn Russell was smashed back, repeatedly, and spent stretches of the match flat on his back and gasping for breath.

Everywhere you looked people seemed to be bleeding, or sporting fresh wrap, strapping, and bandages and the doctors were off and on like a couple of cuckoos popping out of a broken clock.

All these stoppages meant the first half stretched on the best part of an hour. It had everything you would want in a game of rugby if you're a front-rower. There were nine scrums, and Scotland's pack did brilliantly to win two of them against the head, something no one has done against South Africa so far this year.

The second of them, from five metres inside South Africa's half, led to Scotland's solitary penalty goal. Problem was their lineout wasn't working nearly so well, and it's been the source for almost three-quarters of the tries they've scored so far this year.

Here they missed two attacking opportunities on South Africa's 22 because George Turner threw the ball over the back. When they did get it right, at the third time of asking, they worked an overlap off the back of it but it sputtered out when Darcy Graham held on to the ball too long. It was just about the only time in the first 60 minutes they found any real room in which to work. The South African defence was so fast, and so fierce, that Russell never had time or space to try any of his midfield wizardry; every time it seemed like he might be about to whip a rabbit out of the hat, someone clobbered him before he could finish the trick. There is more than one side to Russell, though, and he mucked in with the scrapping, he even threw himself into a superb tap tackle to stop Grant Williams scoring a great freewheeling try in the dying minutes.

You could see what Scotland wanted to do. They were trying to play in a hurry, to make it a helter-skelter free-for-all, and Russell kept calling for quicker ball, flapping his arms wide either side in exasperation. But South Africa weren't about to be rushed. They play a slow and stifling style of rugby, at least until one of their brilliant wings Kurt-Lee Arendse and Cheslin Kolbe gets on the ball. Then the match snaps into fast-forward and everything starts to move like a chain unspooling from a broken winch and the exhausted defenders are left trying to snatch it back before it runs away altogether.

Over 40 minutes the general effect was that Scotland came off like a man trying desperately hard to prop up an elephant's bottom to stop it from sitting on him. It was a heroic attempt, with a predictable ending.

South Africa duly flattened them in the minutes after half-time, scoring once when Pieter-Steph du Toit bundled his way over after a series of rushes, and then again three minutes later when Manie Libbok picked out Arendse with a brilliant high cross-field kick into the space behind Duhan van der Merwe. That settled it at 18-3.

Scotland started to show a little more of themselves afterwards, perhaps because South Africa felt they had won the game. It was too little, too late, a last squeak from a side who you guess will need all of the 14 days before their next game to recover from this one.

The matches

Live on ITV1 unless stated

Pool A	P	W	D	L	F	A	B	Pts
Italy	1	1	0	0	52	8	1	5
France	1	1	0	0	27	13	0	4
Uruguay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Zealand	1	0	0	1	13	27	0	0
Namibia	1	0	0	1	8	52	0	0

8 Sep France 27 New Zealand 13
9 Sep Italy 52 Namibia 8
14 Sep France v Uruguay, Lille (8pm)
15 Sep New Zealand v Namibia, Toulouse (8pm)
20 Sep Italy v Uruguay, Nice (4.45pm, ITV4)
21 Sep France v Namibia, Marseille (8pm, ITV4)
27 Sep Uruguay v Namibia, Lyon (4.45pm, ITV4)
29 Sep New Zealand v Italy, Lyon (8pm)
5 Oct New Zealand v Uruguay, Lyon (8pm, ITV4)
6 Oct France v Italy, Lyon (8pm)

Pool B	P	W	D	L	F	A	B	Pts
Ireland	1	1	0	0	82	8	1	5
South Africa	1	1	0	0	18	3	0	4
Tonga	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland	1	0	0	1	3	18	0	0
Romania	1	0	0	1	8	82	0	0

9 Sep Ireland 82 Romania 8
Yesterday South Africa 18 Scotland 3
16 Sep Ireland v Tonga, Nantes (8pm)
17 Sep South Africa v Romania, Bordeaux (2pm)
23 Sep South Africa v Ireland, Paris (8pm)
24 Sep Scotland v Tonga, Nice (4.45pm)
30 Sep Scotland v Romania, Lille (8pm)
1 Oct South Africa v Tonga, Marseille (8pm)
7 Oct Ireland v Scotland, Paris (8pm)
8 Oct Tonga v Romania, Lille (4.45pm, ITV3)

Pool C	P	W	D	L	F	A	B	Pts
Australia	1	1	0	0	35	15	1	5
Wales	1	1	0	0	32	26	1	5
Fiji	1	0	0	1	26	32	2	2
Portugal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Georgia	1	0	0	1	15	35	0	0

9 Sep Australia 35 Georgia 15
Yesterday Wales 32 Fiji 26
16 Sep Wales v Portugal, Nice (4.45pm)
17 Sep Australia v Fiji, Saint-Étienne (4.45pm)
23 Sep Georgia v Portugal, Toulouse (1pm)
24 Sep Wales v Australia, Lyon (8pm)
30 Sep Fiji v Georgia, Bordeaux (4.45pm)
1 Oct Australia v Portugal, Saint-Étienne (4.45pm, ITV4)
7 Oct Wales v Georgia, Nantes (2pm)
8 Oct Fiji v Portugal, Toulouse (8pm, ITV4)

Pool D	P	W	D	L	F	A	B	Pts
Japan	1	1	0	0	42	12	1	5
England	1	1	0	0	27	10	0	4
Samoa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Argentina	1	0	0	1	10	27	0	0
Chile	1	0	0	1	12	42	0	0

9 Sep England 27 Argentina 10
Yesterday Japan 42 Chile 12
16 Sep Samoa v Chile, Bordeaux (2pm, ITV4)
17 Sep England v Japan, Nice (8pm)
22 Sep Argentina v Samoa, Saint-Étienne (4.45pm)
23 Sep England v Chile, Lille (4.45pm)
28 Sep Japan v Samoa, Toulouse (8pm, ITV4)
30 Sep Argentina v Chile, Nantes (2pm)
7 Oct England v Samoa, Lille (4.45pm)
8 Oct Japan v Argentina, Nantes (noon)

Quarter-finals
Sat 14 Oct Winner Group C v Runner-up Group D
Marseille (4pm)
Winner Group B v Runner-up Group A
Paris (8pm)
Sun 15 Oct Winner Group D v Runner-up Group C
Marseille (4pm)
Winner Group A v Runner-up Group B
Paris (8pm)

Semi-finals
Fri 20 Oct Winner QF1 v Winner QF2
Paris (8pm)
Sat 21 Oct Winner QF3 v Winner QF4
Paris (8pm)

Third-place playoff
Fri 27 Oct Loser SF1 v Loser SF2
Paris (8pm)

Final
Sat 28 Oct Winner SF1 v Winner SF2
Paris (8pm)

Boks blitz

South Africa put on a second-half show to see off sloppy Scotland



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Comfort zone

Barney Ronay on how Maguire has become Southgate's sofa



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Sean Ingle

Farah was great but his legacy is deeply difficult

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The Guardian
Monday
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2023

Sport



LASZLO GECZO/INPHO/SHUTTERSTOCK

Rugby World Cup 2023

Wily Wales survive frantic Fiji fightback

Match report

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United give Antony leave to address allegations

Will Unwin

Manchester United have given Antony a leave of absence to allow the Brazilian to deal with a number of allegations of violence against women. The 23-year-old's former partner Gabriela Cavallin made numerous accusations against him, which are being investigated by police in Greater Manchester and which he denies. Since the first set of allegations were made public two other women have claimed Antony was violent towards them, allegations which he vehemently denied in an interview on Brazilian TV.

The Brazilian newspaper Extra says a police report was filed in Brazil by the influencer and law student Rayssa de Freitas in May 2022 alleging Antony injured her during an incident involving the player and another woman in São Paulo. Meanwhile, Ingrid Lana claimed on Brazilian TV that Antony "pushed me against the wall, and I hit my head" at his Manchester home in October last year.

"I have agreed with Manchester United to take a period of absence while I address the allegations made against me," Antony said in a statement. "This was a mutual decision to avoid distraction to my teammates and unnecessary controversy for the club. I want to reiterate my innocence of the things I have been accused of, and I will fully cooperate with the police to help them reach the truth."

United have not suspended Antony and he will remain on full pay. The club said in a statement: "Manchester United acknowledges the allegations made against Antony … it has been agreed with Antony that he will delay his return until further notice in order to address the allegations.

"As a club we condemn acts of violence and abuse. We recognise the importance of safeguarding all those involved in this situation, and acknowledge the impact these allegations have on survivors of abuse."



▲ *Antony faces several allegations of violence against women*

Silencing the critics

Genge believes rejuvenated England 'can win World Cup'

Gerard Meagher
Marseille

Ellis Genge has expressed his belief that England can win the Rugby World Cup after silencing their critics by beginning the tournament with a defiant victory against Argentina.

England went into the match on Saturday as underdogs after a desperate warm-up campaign and, despite losing Tom Curry to a red card inside three minutes, Steve Borthwick's side produced the finest performance of his tenure with George Ford kicking all their points in a 27-10 victory against the Pumas in Marseille.



Ellis Genge thinks the hard graft is starting to pay off for England

England were widely written off before the World Cup and when Borthwick named his squad a month ago he declined repeatedly the opportunity to say he believed his side were contenders for the title.

His players adopted a similar stance but after England took a significant step towards the quarter-finals – with pool stage matches against Japan, Chile and Samoa to come – Genge said: "We want to win the World Cup and we're doing the same thing every week. Consistency, consistency. This is what we're aiming for, every single week we said we were building, and nobody believed it. But I believe we can win this World Cup. Of course I do. Otherwise I wouldn't be here. We're going to go again every week.

"There was not one second in the last few weeks that I've thought: 'We're in trouble here.' I honestly haven't. I know that's hard to believe but I haven't felt like that at all. I'm not saying we've cracked it by any sense but it's a step in the right direction. We've been chipping away, doing our graft, and we're confident. We've been doing the work, so we can be confident. When you're in a team 24 hours a day, seven days a week for three months, you know where you are and where you're going. It doesn't take a genius.

"I know it's hard from the outside – I support Bristol Rovers so I know how it feels when you're not getting results. When that

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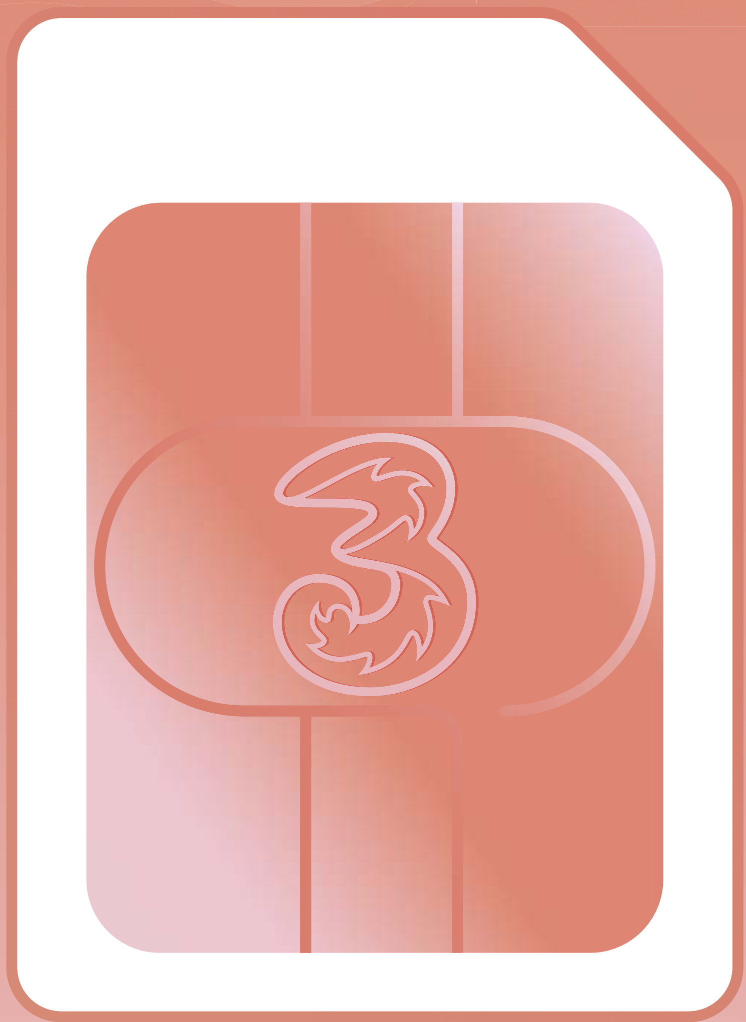
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Moscow and Pyongyang's new closeness is cause for concern *Editorials, page 2*

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The answer to mass migration: more humanity *Clive Myrie, page 4*

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The Guardian Monday 11 September 2023

Journal

Opinion and ideas



ILLUSTRATION: TOMEKAH GEORGE

Covid's back? For vulnerable people, it never went away

Frances Ryan



It is 1.35pm and I'm having to explain coronavirus transmission to a nurse. I am due an appointment at 2.30, and I've been phoned because I say I'm clinically vulnerable. I ask whether the nurse has an N95 mask (as they're proved to be most effective). She does not. I ask whether she and the team are taking weekly lateral flow tests, like her colleague said. She is not, and is unsure why that was promised. "We don't need to do that any more," she says breezily. What she means is: she has no official duty to do so any more. Clinically vulnerable (CV) patients still need the Covid-19 protections. They just don't get them.

We don't really talk about this. We don't really talk about coronavirus at all. More than three years on from the start of the pandemic, there's understandably a desire to move on, to bury painful memories. This has only been encouraged by the government, which has honed the message "Covid is over", as if saying this somehow makes it so.

Since February last year, when Boris Johnson removed all protections, such as the legal obligation for people with coronavirus to isolate and most free testing, there's been no official strategy or guidance on reducing transmission of the virus. The result is a kind of mass denial - an agreed forgetting. The subject crops up from time to time. A breaking news banner announces a new variant. A friend texts that she's stuck in bed "with the worst summer cough". Then we carry on - until we are forced to remember once again.

Watching coronavirus make a return to the headlines in recent days has therefore felt like deja vu. First, the vaccine rollout in England was hastily brought forward in light of concerns over the new variant, BA.2.86, which recently caused an outbreak in a care home in Norfolk. Then it was announced that testing and monitoring would be scaled up again after scientists warned the country was nearly "flying blind".

That sound you can hear is a stable door closing and the horse bolting. Though cases and hospitalisations are thankfully far lower than at the height of the pandemic, the daily number of positive Covid tests in England has been increasing since the end of June - a trend that is likely to grow further in the coming weeks, as we socialise more indoors and children mix at school. It's hopeful that many cases are now mild - but that isn't true for everyone: at last count, 1.5 million people were experiencing long Covid symptoms that adversely affected their daily activities, and the virus still poses a

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Covid's back? For vulnerable people, it never went away

Frances Ryan

← Continued from front

significant risk of death to many people with pre-existing health conditions.

Not that you'd know it. When was the last time you heard a minister even say the word "coronavirus"? As Rishi Sunak's government lurches from crisis to crisis, Covid is labelled as "job done" because it is more convenient that way. Britain's "Covid policy" in 2023 is effectively King Canute's courtiers watching another wave coming and insisting that sheer will alone can stop the tide.

Take immunisation. This week, the vaccine rollout for people at the highest risk (over-65s, some clinically vulnerable people, and health and care staff) begins - but 12 million fewer people are eligible for a jab compared with last year, as part of plans for the NHS to "get back to normal". On Friday a group of MPs called on the government to extend the booster programme, but currently those outside the slim eligibility criteria won't even be able to buy a vaccine privately. This winter, it will be possible to pop into Boots to buy a flu jab - but not a Covid jab. This is clearly dangerous (even many CV people don't qualify for protection), but it's also a false economy. Fail to fund vaccines and the taxpayer pays more in the long run, from ICU beds in a buckling NHS to more long Covid patients falling out of the workforce.

Or consider the lack of support for clinically vulnerable people. The 3.7 million high-risk people previously asked to shield at home - including 500,000 immunocompromised people who get little to no protection from vaccines - have effectively been abandoned to survive alone. With nationwide precautions removed, many disabled people I've spoken to feel forced to avoid shops, pubs and public transport. Others who previously stayed safe by working at home are being told to return to packed offices. The so-called return to normal has always been one-sided: while non-disabled people rightly enjoy freedom, CV people are told to accept indefinite isolation.

Just look at the way the NHS has dropped many of the rules for staff that were meant to protect vulnerable patients. While some healthcare workers are taking precautions at their own discretion, NHS staff in England don't have to wear a mask, and the majority who have respiratory symptoms are no longer asked to test for Covid. That means a patient with lung disease could be forced to get treatment from a nurse with a Covid cough.

A new poll shown to me by Clinically Vulnerable Families, a support group involved in the coronavirus inquiry, finds 69% of CV people surveyed said they had cancelled or not made a medical appointment due to concerns over lack of Covid precautions; 80% said this was having an impact on their physical health.

Still, best not mention it. Time to move on. The trouble is, denial is not a long-term plan. Coronavirus is effectively a fire: ignoring it doesn't stop it, it just lets the damage spread. The paradox of the pandemic has always been that the only way to "move on" is to engage with it. That means smart, non-invasive public health measures such as masks in hospitals, a thorough vaccination programme, ventilation in public spaces and sick pay to help workers isolate.

But it also means confronting our impulse to believe that all of this is unnecessary and arduous. Even the phrase "Covid restrictions" - a term used by almost every media outlet - is loaded, suggesting low-key mitigations are burdens rather than simple ways to free CV people. That the virus primarily "only" affects those with underlying health conditions has always been the unspoken excuse for indifference.

After three years, hundreds of thousands of deaths and a shared national trauma, there is something to be said for not only building a better relationship with Covid, but with each other. In the meantime, millions of people at the highest risk will be left to shrink their lives or leave the house afraid - and ministers will do nothing to help. But why does it matter? We don't need to do that any more.

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'Comment is free... but facts are sacred' CP Scott

Prisons

A second escape from HMP Wandsworth rightly puts ministers under pressure

The escape of a suspected terrorist from HMP Wandsworth last week proves the point that critics of English and Welsh prisons have been making for some time with rising desperation. Overcrowded, dirty jails with demoralised staff are unable to fulfil their purpose of rehabilitating prisoners. They are also a danger to inmates, staff and the public. Daniel Khalife, who was on the run for four days, was recaptured in west London on Saturday. Alex Chalk, the justice secretary, has ordered an investigation into how the former British soldier managed to flee by strapping himself to the bottom of a catering delivery truck. Sir Mark Rowley, the Metropolitan police chief, believes the escape must have been planned, possibly with help from inside the prison, and 150 counter-terrorism officers were involved in the search.

It seems likely that mistakes were made in Wandsworth, and individuals may be culpable. The placement of a man accused of involvement in espionage in a category B prison, rather than at high-security Belmarsh, will be examined. So will the decision to employ him in the kitchen - a "plum job" usually offered to prisoners serving long sentences, according to John Podmore, a former governor. But Mr Chalk's promise to leave no stone unturned and find out "who was on duty" did not inspire confidence. Instead, the panicked ministerial reaction was a disturbing example of locking the stable door after the horse has bolted.

With a population at 171% of its certified capacity, Wandsworth is the second most overcrowded prison in the English and Welsh estate - just behind HMP Durham. A previous escape from Wandsworth took place in 2019. But problems are not limited to one or two "failing jails". After an inspection, the issuing of an urgent notification is the most serious step inspectors can take, requiring an action plan from the government within 28 days. In an unprecedented deterioration, three separate urgent notifications have been issued in the past five months - one of them about Cookham Wood, a youth prison, which was found to be full of homemade weapons.

Of course, public concern - and that of politicians and the security services - is highest when prisons are revealed to be incapable of performing their most basic task, of keeping people locked up. But as well as punishing criminals, jails are supposed to help them change. Amid current levels of violence, overuse of solitary confinement and lack of purposeful activity, experts warn that inmates are more likely to be made worse. Earlier this year, a German court refused a British extradition request on the grounds that detention conditions were unacceptable.

The number of prison officers has climbed by 3.2% since last year, to 22,426. Over the same period, the number of prisoners rose by 7% to its current total of 87,124 - not far off the all-time high of just over 88,000. But perhaps more alarming than the raw numbers is the fact that - as in police forces, schools and hospitals - experienced staff whose jobs were cut under austerity are proving difficult to replace. The new people hired by recruiters, when ministers belatedly recognised the harm caused by depleted workforces, are not like-for-like replacements. Rapid turnover and difficulties around retention are now acute issues across the public sector.

Whether a lack of experienced staff was the specific cause of Wandsworth's failure remains to be seen. But the past week's events are rightly piling the pressure on the Conservatives over their atrocious record on prisons and elsewhere.

North Korea

Moscow and Pyongyang are drawing closer. That's not just a problem for Kyiv

North Korea is adept at grabbing attention through both rhetoric and weaponry. On Friday it announced that it had launched its first "tactical nuclear attack submarine", though the South Korean military said it did not appear to be operational. The most important development of recent days, however, is the report that Kim Jong-un will soon visit Russia, to discuss weapons sales with Vladimir Putin. Moscow has also proposed trilateral naval drills with China. An old but never easy three-way relationship is picking up again.

Mr Kim's grandfather rose to power thanks to the Soviet Union's support; China's close but fraught relationship with its neighbour is longstanding. Yet from 2006, Moscow and Beijing were sufficiently concerned about Pyongyang's weapons programme to support a series of UN security council sanctions, even as their differences with the west on other matters mushroomed. Last year, however, they blocked a US-drafted resolution to tighten sanctions.

The shift began with Donald Trump. His lurch from threats of "fire and fury" to bestowing a bilateral meeting on Mr Kim pushed a previously disdainful Xi Jinping into embracing Pyongyang. When a second Trump summit broke down, Mr Kim courted Russia too, to remind the US that he had options, and held his first meeting with Mr Putin in 2019.

But the invasion of Ukraine was a turning point. North Korea is one of a handful of countries to have enthusiastically backed Russia at the UN. A year ago, US intelligence said it believed that Moscow was buying huge quantities of artillery shells and rockets from Pyongyang as its stocks were rapidly consumed. This summer, Mr Kim personally guided Sergei Shoigu, Russia's defence minister, around an arms exhibition.

The pandemic appears to have left North Korea in desperate circumstances. The leadership cut the country off entirely and seized the opportunity to tighten its grip over every aspect of life - leaving people unable to feed themselves. China is believed to have been propping it up with emergency supplies. Nonetheless, while food is desperately needed, the regime is likely to press Moscow hard for technological assistance. Pyongyang's alarming progress in its weapons programmes proceeds, but it still needs expertise and income to advance further.

On Russia's part, its need for help from its former protege is another indication of its reduced status. And while the compatibility of Pyongyang's older Soviet-copy arms is presumably a factor, the discussions also suggest that China so far remains unwilling to sell Russia weaponry, despite its "no limits" friendship, diplomatic backing and the ongoing sale of dual-use equipment.

Neither Moscow nor Beijing wants to see North Korea advance its capabilities. It is a costly, unreliable partner. They want to avoid nuclear proliferation in the region and to limit the development of US-Japan-South Korea partnership: though it is primarily a response to China's growing might, concerns about Pyongyang have contributed. Russia would like to maintain its battered relationship with South Korea - a major trade partner prior to the invasion of Ukraine - rather than push it closer to the US.

But even if Mr Putin stops short of sharing technology, income from arms sales is more likely to be used to fund weapons development than it is to feed malnourished North Koreans. Russian purchases might also encourage others to buy from Pyongyang again. The renewed ties are cause for significant concern, and not only in Ukraine.



Ancient cemeteries in Cairo's City of the Dead have been demolished to make way for a new highway
PHOTOGRAPH: KHALED ELFIQI/EPA

The desert megacities that are concreting over the past

Nesrine Malik



Spread over an area almost 7km (4 miles) long, Cairo's Necropolis is a sprawling district of tombs, mausoleums, mosques and courtyards. Known as the City of the Dead, it is very much alive with memories of those buried there, and with the families who live in it, some of whom have done so for generations. It dates to the seventh century, but has always existed in dizzying proximity to modernity. Billboards, cars and construction rub shoulders with the silent tombs. Buried there are not just ancient kings and dignitaries but contemporary politicians, celebrities and Cairenes.

Their slumber is now an uneasy one. In 2020, authorities began demolishing parts of the city to make way for an expressway. Since then, the threat of demolition has hung over the rest of the city. Hussein Omar's mother, as well as some eight generations of his family, are buried there, and he hoped one day to lie next to them. He tells me that for years his family has been in deadlock with the state over what rights they have to visit; but that has now escalated, as the graves themselves have come under threat of removal. In recent times, he says, there has been what appears to be a "deliberate targeting" in which "the attempts to erase history are part and parcel of attempts to overwrite people's claims to property rights over what are clearly historic plots of valuable real estate".

It is a face-off that symbolises the challenges of a city that has recently seen the hectic construction of a "new Cairo". Most notable among these projects are a new administrative capital to the east of the city, the site of a presidential palace, government buildings and residences. A gigantic Astroturfed district with artificial lakes, technology hubs and Africa's tallest building, the new capital's design ethos draws on Egypt's pharaonic past, featuring a crystal pyramid and motifs inspired by ancient Egyptian gods.

On an urban planner's paper, it is sort of impressive. A city groaning under a large population concentrated into a few areas, has expanded into the desert and modernised. But with that, history, green spaces and people's rights to land and memories are being sacrificed, as the soul of the city seems to decamp towards the new buildings on its outskirts. In this haste, places such as the City of the Dead become not precious heritage, but inconvenient obstacles.

> **History, green spaces and people's rights are being sacrificed as the soul of Cairo decamps to the new buildings on the outskirts**

But it's not all a crude dash to the future. It is also a rebuking of the past. The shadow of the 2011 revolution still looms large, and though its goals didn't come to be, remnants of its physical and psychological infrastructure remain, barriers to a political future where the possibility of uprising is foreclosed.

And so Tahrir Square – the green centre of the protests, where people would gather, loiter and picnic – has been filled with concrete and granite, with pharaonic antiquities at the centre and guards on the periphery. This "pharaonic futurist" aesthetic, Omar says, and the sterile, easily policed spaces that are replacing public areas, are there to prevent nostalgia. There's a desire, he says, "to stamp out symbols of a more pluralistic liberal age. An attempt to invent a genealogy for the contemporary Egyptian state and people, while demolishing any real genealogy to which people have affective ties." It is a projection of a national identity that is dictated by the state, one with vast ecological and historical fallout, as well as high financial cost. All this while Egypt's economy is in crisis, in large part due to the cost of these projects.

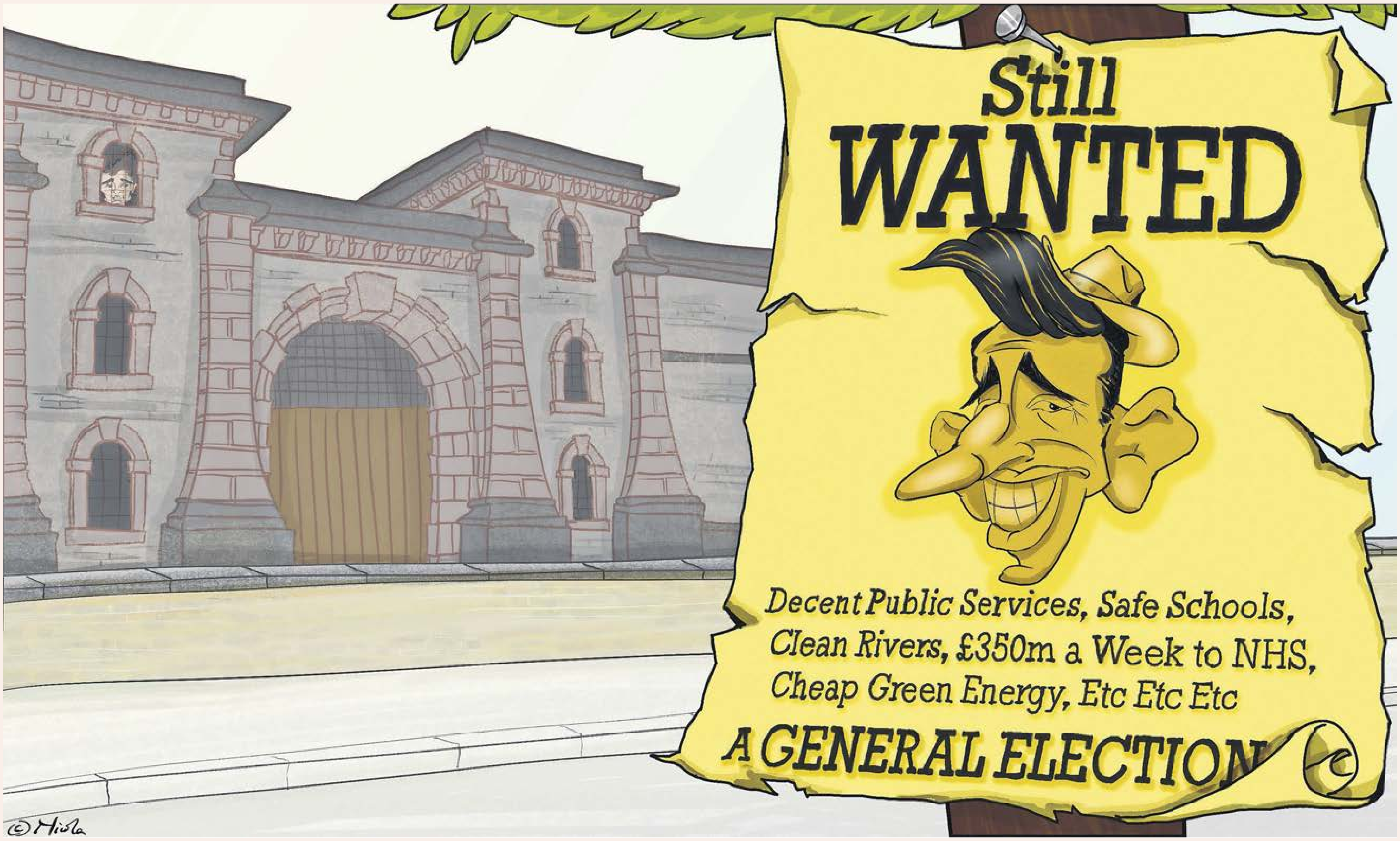
There is no more transparent projection of an invented national story than in Neom, another vast, ambitious city, being erected in the north-west of Saudi Arabia. Neom is Saudi's rebranding in physical form. At 170km (105 miles) long, it is a narrow strip, mirrored on each side and taller than the Empire State building. Its inhabitants will be enclosed in a managed, temperate climate with its own fauna and flora and an artificial moon.

The buzz themes are the same, and all pay lip service to an idea of "modernity" that scrapes the symbols of nationhood and packages them in notions of energy efficiency, innovation, hi tech and sustainability. Neom is an expensive and ecologically costly repositioning of Saudi Arabia as a country that is under new management, and a more socially liberal order, if not a more liberal political one.

The extrajudicial killings of dissidents, dispossession and persecution of those with land claims, and record group executions will continue. But they will be easier to swallow for global investors and professionals if they do so in a place that has adopted their lingua franca. Consultants, architects and PR firms have already eagerly signed up to build and promote Saudi's city of the future.

The difference between such Gulf projects and others in Egypt is that these makeovers only become viable when there is a system of subsidies that wealthy governments can fund to purchase consent. Repression without patronage can only go so far. Last week, after sustained public protests, demolitions in the City of the Dead were quietly halted, even though strict restrictions on visitation and entry remain.

As the needs of new megacities become more pressing, it is hard to imagine that this is anything more than a delay. But there is something too visceral, too on the nose about being forced to dig up the bodies of the dead, and the tombs that have housed them for centuries, that might make authorities think twice. In hoping to exorcise the ghosts of the past, you may end up raising them instead.



The answer to mass migration: more humanity

Clive Myrie



Are the world's richer nations normalising the deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean? That's the fear of the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM), the body established in 1951 "out of the chaos and displacement of western Europe after the second world war". Eleven million people were uprooted, and the IOM's job was to help European governments identify countries where people could be resettled.

In the 1950s, the IOM arranged transport for nearly a million migrants to their new home countries, with the success of the resettlement programme based on international cooperation, and the idea that the burden had to be shared. Fast forward more than 70 years from the IOM's creation, and we see a very different attitude towards the world's migration crises, when the climate crisis, along with war and poverty, is helping fuel displacement in unprecedented numbers.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre reports that a record 71.1 million people worldwide in 2022 fled their native communities in search of safety and shelter, a 20% increase on the year before. Nearly three-quarters of the world's displaced people live in just 10 countries, including Syria, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ukraine and Sudan, all racked by war. But most displacements last year, 32.6 million, were due to climate disasters, including floods, drought and landslides. Many of these people, unable to rebuild their lives at home, will inevitably try to build new lives abroad. But where is the international cooperation to help them?

The urge to seek opportunities beyond the seas is as old as time. My own parents are members of the Windrush generation, and I chronicle their experience of migration from the Caribbean to the colonial "motherland" of England in my new memoir, Everything is Everything. My mum and dad were seeking a better life, pulled by the promise of a new land. But the UK was also desperate to fill a labour shortage caused by the war, and the decision of about 2 million white Britons to escape depressed, ration-book Britain for other parts of the Commonwealth. The hostility and abuse many in the Windrush generation suffered on arrival forged a determination to succeed, and a resilience that's helped transform this country.

The drive for foreign migrant workers – so vital to postwar reconstruction – was a feature of northern Europe after 1945, hence the creation of the IOM. West Germany, for instance, had a Gastarbeiter or migrant worker programme, which explains the presence of the Turkish community in today's unified Germany.

What's interesting is that labour shortages are back. In the post-pandemic world, unemployment in richer nations has fallen to some of the lowest levels in decades, with vacancies near an all-time high and employers badly needing workers. Governments are now actively encouraging immigration, with Canada hoping for 1.5 million new residents in the next couple of years and many wealthy countries – including some traditionally opposed to immigration, such as Japan and South Korea – now more receptive to foreign-born talent, as they battle ageing populations.

And yet for most of the people now fleeing war, poverty and the effects of climate catastrophe, there are few visa programmes, resettlement schemes or safe routes to wealthier nations, where they may be able to live prosperous lives. Some will speculate that this is because the people involved are mostly black or brown, underpinning the fear of the IOM that their deaths in the Mediterranean are being normalised.

The IOM has calculated that, since 2014, more than 28,000 people have lost their lives in their attempts to reach Europe, and the number of people reported dead or missing so far this year outstrips the numbers for each of the previous four years. There are delays and gaps in state-led search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean, and some governments, such as Hungary, haven't hidden the fact that they're happy to accept Christian and white migrants, but not non-Christian, black or brown people.

The UN says now is the time for a coordinated, global strategy on international migration, with the general assembly meeting this month in New York for a high-level summit. The aim is to find a more humane approach to what the UN is calling the worst migration crisis since the second world war. After 1945, global leaders rose to the challenge. Now, we all wait for them to do it again.

*

Clive Myrie *is a BBC News presenter. He joins the Guardian's Hugh Muir on Wednesday 13 September to discuss his new memoir, Everything is Everything. Full details at membership.theguardian.com*

Letters

Established 1906

Country diary

Allendale, Northumberland

The spiders have been waiting for the sun to come out. I've looked for them each day, missing their quiet presence. Now, like me, they are reaching out for warmth. I think how similar we are in responding to the heat of the morning.

These are zebra spiders (*Salticus scenicus*), a diminutive species that lives around our front door and south-facing windows, both inside and out. The wet summer has had them sheltering in silken retreats along the door jamb; now they have come out to sunbathe and to catch their prey.

First, some tentative legs edge around the door. Then a stripy spider slips out, her abdomen marked in bands of white and charcoal grey. I know it's a female, since males are only found in spring and early summer. Also, males have elongated jaws like outsize droopy moustaches. They wave these around during courtship while doing a flashy sideways dance and wiggling legs and abdomen.

After mating, the female lays up to 25 eggs in a silk cocoon, guarding them for a month until they hatch – my reason for not cleaning the channel between door and frame.

Using closeup binoculars, I study the spider's symmetrical patterns, made not of fur but of flattened scales, like those of a butterfly. In common with other species of jumping spiders, she has four pairs of eyes, ranged like headlights on an off-road vehicle. These can judge distance to accurately pinpoint prey.

Most of the time, the spiders skitter about with jerky movements, walking backwards with ease, despite having eight legs. Their prey of flies, mosquitos, other spiders and moths can be several times a zebra spider's size.

I watch as the female traverses the warm wood of the door. When she spots a bluebottle, she freezes. The fly escapes but, had it not, the spider would have fastened a safety line of silk to the door before pouncing and injecting the bluebottle with venom.

Midday now, and the plants by the front door are also reacting to the heat. There's the scent of cherry pie from the heliotrope and of honey from the bidens. I, the spiders and all of nature soak up the sun.

Susie White

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What's behind the rise in school absence rates?

While there are a number of reasons why school attendance has crumbled, perhaps a fundamental issue is being overlooked (Back to school, 2 September). When children have experienced freedom of mind and choice during closures, why would they wish to return to police states, largely administered by privatised mini-corporations that control everything from clothes to how to think and express yourself?

The fact that 40,000 teachers left the profession for reasons other than retirement in the last year suggests many adults find the stress-inducing conditions and a curriculum that is dull, completely test-orientated and largely irrelevant to the pressing needs of being alive in 2023 unbearable too.

It may not be a conscious rebellion among children, but refusal is a reaction to a system that induces anxiety when your individuality is denied. Even the children's commissioner, after running a hardline academy, has had a rather late epiphany: fun, play and community are vital aspects of education.

Phil Revels
West Bridgford, Nottinghamshire

● I wonder if it is time to take a deeper look at the current trend in English schools to instil a prison-style discipline approach, and whether this may shed some light on why the number of children refusing to go to school has risen.

My 11-year-old started secondary school last week. The school - not our first choice - pride themselves on their hardline strictness, and we were told in introductory meetings that they are so strict "because they care" and that the immediate one-hour detentions for any infraction (fighting, missing homework, forgetting a pen, chatting, wearing the wrong colour hairband) are to "help the children learn". These phrases are straight out of the coercive control handbook.

They even go as far as insisting children bring their full uniform in (both jumper and blazer) on blisteringly hot days - while the teachers freely wear clothes suitable for the weather. When challenged on this, they point to the very visible results of significant improvements in behaviour and attention in class. But I can't help be left with the question: "At what cost?"

If I were forced to go somewhere every day to walk on eggshells, not speak in the corridors, and wear excessive and uncomfortable clothes, without any autonomy over my own toileting, I would very soon need to stop attending and would require significant mental health support to recover.

Given people tell me that this approach is now pervasive in secondary schools, is there any wonder that there is an epidemic in children needing support with their mental health?

Name and address supplied

● Gaby Hinsliff's piece on children refusing to go to school is really important. Interestingly, 14-year-old Dilly, quoted in the article, hit the nail on the head. Her ideal school would be "much more personal, shorter days, no homework and no tests".

Schools can't deliver this, but small, caring learning communities can. They are springing up all over the country. Our self-managed learning community in Sussex does what Dilly has sensibly identified as the need. We have morning or afternoon programmes for nine- to 17-year-olds, with no imposed teaching, no uniforms, no formal lessons and no imposed timetable - students create their own to-do lists for what they want to learn. And research shows that it works.

Dr Ian Cunningham
Chair of governors, Self Managed Learning College

Spare that hedgerow and save our wildlife

I welcome your editorial (5 September) urging people to support biodiversity in their gardens, and I agree that so much agricultural land has become a hostile environment to wildlife.

A local naturalist once referred to the fields of East Anglia as a desert when it comes to wildlife and biodiversity - prairies for crops and little else, with an occasional border of a stunted hedgerow.

I sit here in my garden, listening to the nauseating ripping and graunching, as a mechanical hedge cutter lays waste the bountiful harvest of the nearby hedgerows; the hawthorn berries, sloes, elderberries, rosehips, and an abundance of blackberries. An hour ago, before the heat of the day, we walked our dog along the track, the hedge full of life: birds, butterflies, and a profusion of other insects. Food for a whole host of animals.

Tomorrow morning, all we will see will be the split and fractured stumps of the trees and bushes, vanquished in their quest to grow, to provide food, and be part of the rich biodiversity that would be possible, if only a little thought had been given as to when to "trim" this amazing food source for animals, as the seasons move towards winter.

Sue Boase
Haverhill, Suffolk

When the flight data software says no

For a few years about 20 years ago, I advised the board of Nats, the air traffic control services provider, about software failures, including in NAS, its flight data processing system at that time (Regulator opens inquiry into air traffic control failure, 7 September). NAS was written in 1966 and had been heavily modified, but it retained an effective strategy for recovering from flight plan faults. When NAS failed, it restarted within seconds, discarding the most recently entered flight plan. If it failed again, this repeated up to 10 times. Only after 10 successive "startovers" did it admit defeat and stop. Might the current Nats software benefit from adopting a similar strategy?

Martyn Thomas
Emeritus professor of IT, Gresham College, London

● Interesting that the air traffic control system was stumped by two waypoints with the same name. I once shared flights to and from Cuba with another man of the same name. Boarding systems were baffled ("you've already checked in"), resulting in agitated staff and long queues at both Gatwick and Havana.

David Griffiths
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

Ignorance is not bliss for ChatGPT

From Elif Batuman's experience with ChatGPT, it seems that artificial intelligence possesses one very human characteristic: a deep reluctance to confess to ignorance (Proust, ChatGPT and the case of the forgotten quote, 5 September).

Many, many times I have found that instead of simply and candidly replying "I don't know" to my question, my human respondent will answer a nominally similar but significantly different question, often at great length.

Geoff Renshaw
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire

● It sounds like ChatGPT has been reading too much Kafka and Orwell, with all the ruthless reasonableness that an omnipotent state instrument can bring to bear on the citizen's plight. When explanation becomes no more than a dialectic that favours unhelpful intransigence, we may as well all take to our beds and contemplate matters offline.

Tom Brown
Newbury, Berkshire

Corrections and clarifications

● **There are 302 homes in 10 new-build cohousing communities up and running in the UK, not 12 such communities as we said in an article ('We are all of an age, but you can't define us as old', 24 August, G2, p6).**

● **A familiar slip crept into an article that referred to an "alumni", rather than using the singular, alumnus (How the schools' building crisis unfolded, 2 September, p6).**

Editorial complaints and corrections can be sent to guardian.readers@theguardian.com or The readers' editor, **Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU.** You can also leave a voicemail on **020 3353 4736**

Mystified by Jimmy Buffett's greatest hit

I enjoyed the full account of the life of the singer-songwriter Jimmy Buffett (Obituary, 8 September) and certainly hadn't registered the extent of his accomplishment as a businessman. The particular success of his song Margaritaville remains a mystery to me, however. It seems, at best, an unexceptionable sub-Eagles ditty. Far better, if only for its title, is My Head Hurts, My Feet Stink and I Don't Love Jesus.

Ed Lilley
Bristol

● So Lin Friend and her husband have "two Oxford degrees between them" (presumably one each?) but were unable to successfully renew their senior railcards (Letters, 8 September)? What chance then do people with polytechnic degrees, or even Russell Group degrees, have when it comes come to renewing their railcards? I'm not even going to try!

Ted Wilson
Mellor, Greater Manchester

● To mark the first anniversary of King Charles acceding to the throne, it was good to see the Guardian sending him subliminal messages via the Wordwheel puzzle (G2, 8 September), with "abdicate" clearly obtainable from the given letters.

Simon Townley
Toddington, Bedfordshire

● I don't want poetry from Keir Starmer, as Philip Clayton suggested (Letters, 6 September), I want probity.

Rosie Phillips
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

● If, as appears likely, Keir Starmer's Labour party forms a government after the next election, I will be happy that he campaigned in prose. And look forward to his governing in poetry.

Denise Thwaites
Totnes, Devon



Mangosuthu Buthelezi

Powerful figure in apartheid-era South Africa whose Inkatha Freedom party clashed with the ANC

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who has died aged 95, dedicated himself to acquiring and exploiting power over his Zulu tribe in South Africa to such effect that he became an asset to the Afrikaner nationalist administration of the apartheid state and its divide-and-rule strategy for controlling the majority black population. He was the founder of the Inkatha Freedom party, which was tolerated for a while by the African National Congress as an alliance partner in the fight against apartheid. After a breakdown in their relations in 1979, the IFP was a thorn in the ANC's side, undermining much of what it was attempting to achieve. In the early 1980s confrontation between supporters of the two factions more and more frequently led to physical violence, injuries and deaths.

Key to Buthelezi's influence in apartheid South Africa was the policy of the white rulers, laid out by the National party prime minister Hendrik Verwoerd in 1959, of "separate development" areas across the country, to which members of various tribes were ascribed, while denying them basic rights in "white" South Africa. One of these 10 homelands - known as bantustans - was Buthelezi's KwaZulu, which encompassed about 8 million people, one fifth of the South African population.

Buthelezi was appointed head of the KwaZulu territorial authority in 1970, and in 1976 was made its chief minister. He set about accumulating power, recruiting a massive bodyguard and turning the region into a personal fiefdom.

Buthelezi, centre, leads a march through Durban in 1992, protesting against the government and ANC agreement that banned dangerous weapons at political gatherings
WALTER DHLADHLA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Buthelezi went on to seek support in the west from the Heritage Foundation, a conservative US thinktank, which arranged meetings for him with Ronald Reagan, George Bush Sr, Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Kohl.

The ANC saw him as a dangerous and unpredictable rival, someone who was undermining their opposition to the continuance of the bantustans. However, when an assassination squad got him into its sights, Oliver Tambo, then ANC president-in-exile, forbade any attempt on Buthelezi's life.

Tambo met Buthelezi for talks in London in 1979, but Buthelezi leaked his version of their discussions to a newspaper, and any idea of a rapprochement was strangled at birth. Buthelezi further rejected several ANC attempts to reduce the tensions with the IFP. Nevertheless he realised at the end of the 80s that the game was up for apartheid, refused serious dealings with the regime until Nelson Mandela was released by President FW de Klerk in 1990, and claimed that Mandela had thanked him for his support after he was set free.

In the government of national unity, announced after the 1994 general election, Mandela became South Africa's first black president. De Klerk served as a deputy president, and Buthelezi was made minister of home affairs. After the general election in 2004 the IFP left the governing coalition and went into opposition in parliament.

Buthelezi was born in the small town of Mahlabatini in KwaZulu to Mathole Buthelezi, chief of the Buthelezi clan, and Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu, sister of the Zulu King Solomon kaDinuzulu. The Zulus held a unique status in southern Africa for having roundly beaten the British army at the battle of Isandlwana in 1879. A British detachment held out against the Zulus in a much smaller clash at Rorke's Drift, the subject of the 1964 blockbusting film Zulu, in which Buthelezi appeared in a cameo portraying Cetshwayo kaMpande, his great-grandfather.

> **"He relied on his private army of warriors, whom he used as enforcers when needed**

Educated at local schools, he studied history and Bantu (native African) administration at the University of Fort Hare, a segregated institution for black people in the Eastern Cape province that also nurtured several other future black leaders, including Robert Sobukwe, charismatic leader of the radical Pan Africanist Congress.

Buthelezi joined the ANC Youth League and was expelled from Fort Hare after two years for his part in a student boycott. He completed his degree at the University of Natal (now University of KwaZulu-Natal) and then inherited the chieftainship of his clan in 1953, a position he retained for life.

After Buthelezi was appointed head of the KwaZulu territorial authority in 1970, King Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu ascended to the Zulu throne in 1971, but Buthelezi made sure his authority was circumscribed. He relied on his private army of warriors, whom he used as enforcers when needed. Paranoid about criticism, he would write long letters on an old typewriter and fire them off to his detractors. He was a poor orator who delivered rambling speeches; he earned a place in the Guinness Book of Records with an address to the KwaZulu legislative assembly that ended 11 days after it began.

Although he commanded significant support in his homeland, Buthelezi was not overwhelmingly popular. Some estimates suggest he enjoyed the backing of about half the population, including large numbers of the undereducated and unemployed.

After the election in 2004, Buthelezi stayed on in parliament as a member of parliament and leader of the IFP, retaining his seat and his party leadership in the elections of 2009 and 2014. In 2019 he announced that he would not seek re-election as president of the IFP, although he continued to serve as an MP.

Buthelezi married Irene Mzila in 1952. She died in 2019. They had eight children, of whom three survive him.

Dan van der Vat

Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, politician, born 27 August 1928; died 9 September 2023

Dan van der Vat died in 2019

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Mike Yarwood

Star impressionist who poked affectionate fun at royalty, showbiz figures and politicians in the 1970s

The comedy impressionist Mike Yarwood, who has died aged 82, held the record for the most-watched British light entertainment programme of all time (his 1977 BBC One Christmas show attracted 21.4 million viewers, narrowly beating the Morecambe and Wise special that immediately followed) but he later confessed to feeling desperately unhappy and inadequate during the professionally triumphant years when his was a household name.

Yarwood impersonated most of the showbiz stars of the day – Ken Dodd, Frankie Howerd, Steptoe and Son, Max Bygraves, Michael Crawford's Frank Spencer etc – but his most famous comic creations were politicians and royalty: he poked affectionate fun at Prince Charles, Harold Wilson, James Callaghan, Harold Macmillan, Edward Heath and John Major. When he was prime minister, Wilson sat reading state papers with Yarwood on television in the next room, telling his wife: "Give us a shout when I'm on, Mary."

"I pitch a person in my head and I think: 'You are now that person'," Yarwood said.

At the end of a quick-fire burst of impressions, he would murmur his catchphrase, "and this is me …" and launch diffidently into song. His voice was unremarkable, but it was interesting to note that if he was impersonating a fine singer – Frank Sinatra, say – his technique, phrasing and range improved significantly.

In 2002 he said: "Early in my career I wanted to be a standup comedian. I wanted to be a star impressionist and then become a comedian and develop my own personality, but it didn't work because there isn't really a 'me'."

A nervous and shy person, lacking the carapace of confidence and ego that might protect a different performer through the tough times, he seemed unsuited emotionally to life in the public eye and hid behind the meticulously accurate impersonations he created. Hard-working and cooperative in the TV studios – though his perfectionism sometimes made him testy – at home he turned into an alcoholic who destroyed his marriage and alienated his two beloved daughters in the 1980s. Thankfully, the estrangement ended when he got sober, and he was reconciled with his supportive children for the last 30 years of his life.

When he became unfashionable, through a combination of the rise of harder-edged political impressionists such as the Spitting Image team, and his battles with alcohol and depression, his withdrawal was almost total: never has a living star untouched by scandal vanished so utterly. It is quite possible that those under the age of 40 may never have even heard of Yarwood, once one of the most famous men in Britain.

"Everybody who goes on stage has to have a coping strategy," said his mentor and first producer Royston Mayoh. "I often wondered why he put himself through so much pain. He enjoyed entertaining people, and I think he felt the pain of doing that was part and parcel of it."

Younger impressionists idolised him in the 1970s. "He was not a satirist, he was an entertainer," Rory Bremner said. "He had that advantage physically of having a blank-canvas face with not particularly strong features. Therefore he had the ability to become the character. The face changed, the body language changed."

> **"Harold Wilson would sit reading state papers, telling his wife: 'Give us a shout when I'm on, Mary'**



Yarwood, left, with Harold Wilson, the former prime minister, in 1977
PA

The journalist Simon Hoggart spoke about Yarwood's celebrated "Silly Billy" impersonation of then-chancellor of the exchequer Denis Healey: "Out of this bruising, ferocious, very-pleased-with-himself politician, Mike Yarwood created a lovable pantomime figure, and that's one reason why Healey's memoirs were incredibly successful; what people were buying was not Denis Healey's memoirs, they were buying Denis Healey as performed by Mike Yarwood's memoirs."

Yarwood was born in the Cheshire village of Bredbury, his parents having moved from the nearby town of Stockport when the second world war broke out. His father, Wilf, was a fitter and his Irish mother, Bridget, a former nanny. Mike attended Bredbury secondary modern school, where he excelled at football, at one point considering a professional career. Much later he became a director of his local club, Stockport County.

He started work as a dispatch clerk with a mail order firm, then became a trainee salesman for a dress company, all the time honing his impersonations in front of the mirror in his bedroom at home. The breakthrough came when he met Mayoh, then a TV cameraman who also wrote scripts for the BBC children's show Crackerjack!. Guided by Mayoh, he began performing at local hotels, pubs and clubs.

His first TV job was as a warm-up act for ATV's Comedy Bandbox, and he appeared on the show itself in 1963. His live work took off, and in 1964 he did 18 weeks in a Great Yarmouth summer show, followed by a Christmas season at the Royal Court theatre, Liverpool, supporting Dodd.

His growing reputation, particularly as an impersonator of Wilson, led to an acclaimed spot on ATV's Sunday Night at the London Palladium, also in 1964, and a short-lived BBC One series, Let's Laugh, in 1965. Two years later he was one of the stars of BBC Two's Three of a Kind, and in 1968 he graduated to his own show, Will the Real Mike Yarwood Stand Up?, on ATV. This was followed by The Real Mike Yarwood? the following year, and in 1971 he moved to the BBC for the wildly successful Look – Mike Yarwood! which ran for six series and two specials until 1976. That was also the year he was appointed OBE.

In 1969 Yarwood married Sandra Burville, who was in the pop dance troupe the Gojos, and the couple went on to have two daughters, Clare and Charlotte.

His best-known series, Mike Yarwood in Persons, ran on BBC One for four series and seven specials from 1976 to 1981. For the last two years of the series Margaret Thatcher was prime minister and as Yarwood could not capture her, Janet Brown was brought in to fill the role. He made an ill-advised move back to ITV for Mike Yarwood in Persons (2), which ran from 1982 until 1987, but Yarwood's kid gloves approach and nice-guy persona started to look quaint as a grittier era dawned. His confidence badly shaken, the alcohol addiction became overwhelming, and by the end of the 80s he had simply … gone from the screens.

There were a couple of TV profiles of him over the years, and he guested on Have I Got News for You in 1995, but the most notable of his rare appearances in more recent years was as the subject of John Fisher's Heroes of Comedy (2002). On it he talked frankly about his drinking: "I missed my first daughter's first birthday because I was so hungover. I hate thinking about that."

Clare said: "There's a whole blurred period when it was at its worst, and after my parents split up it very much fell on the shoulders of Charlotte and myself to support Daddy because I think my mum, bless her, had taken all she could at that point. So Charlotte and I became like parents to him and tried to help him through."

In 1986 he was banned from driving after being found nearly three times over the drink-drive limit. In 1990 he had a heart attack at his home in Weybridge, Surrey, and gave up alcohol completely the following year. In 1999 he underwent treatment for depression at the Priory Clinic. He remained close to Sandra, who remarried.

"People say 'Mike, you're not on telly any more'," he said. "No, but the important thing is, I'm sober and I'm happy. If I never step on stage again, I've had a wonderful life."

Stephen Dixon

Mike (Michael Edward) Yarwood, impressionist, born 14 June 1941; died 8 September 2023

Birthdays

Philip Ardagh, children's author, 62; **Richard Ashcroft**, singer, 52; **Bashar al-Assad**, president of Syria, 58; **Franz Beckenbauer**, footballer and manager, 78; **Munroe Bergdorf**, model, 36; **Catherine Bott**, soprano, 71; **Anthony Browne**, children's author and illustrator, 77; **Jonny Buckland**, guitarist, 46; **Harry Connick Jr**, singer and actor, 56; **Julie Covington**, singer and actor, 77; **Prof Anne Dell**, biochemist, 73; **Brian De Palma**, director, 83; **Tony Gilroy**, screenwriter and director, 67; **Judith Howarth**, soprano, 61; **Clive Lewis**, Labour MP, 52; **Virginia Madsen**, actor, 62; **Moby**, musician, 58; **Jon Moss**, drummer, 66; **Arvo Pärt**, composer, 88; **Brian Perkins**, newsreader, 80; **Matthew Stevens**, snooker player, 46; **The Very Rev Michael Tavinor**, former dean of Hereford, 70; **The Right Rev Graham Usher**, bishop of Norwich, 53; **Roger Uttley**, rugby union player, 74; **Sir Charles Walker**, Conservative MP, 56; **Prof Julie Williams**, director, Dementia Research Institute, 66.

Puzzles

Saturday's solutions

Sandwich sudoku

4	5	7	3	1	9	8	2	6	0
1	3	9	6	2	8	7	4	5	3
6	2	8	4	7	5	3	1	9	0
9	7	1	2	4	3	5	6	8	7
2	6	4	8	5	7	9	3	1	3
3	8	5	1	9	6	4	7	2	0
7	9	3	5	6	2	1	8	4	16
8	1	6	9	3	4	2	5	7	6
5	4	2	7	8	1	6	9	3	6
6	0	8	5	18	35	4	29	8	

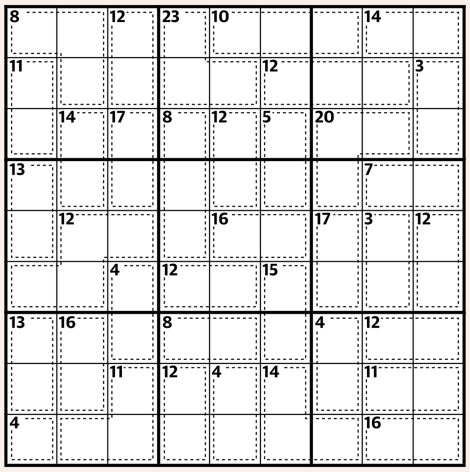
Killer sudoku 882

4	8	1	5	9	2	6	3	7
7	2	6	4	3	8	5	9	1
9	3	5	6	1	7	4	2	8
5	1	4	7	8	3	9	6	2
6	7	2	9	5	1	8	4	3
8	9	3	2	6	4	7	1	5
3	5	9	1	7	6	2	8	4
2	6	8	3	4	5	1	7	9
1	4	7	8	2	9	3	5	6

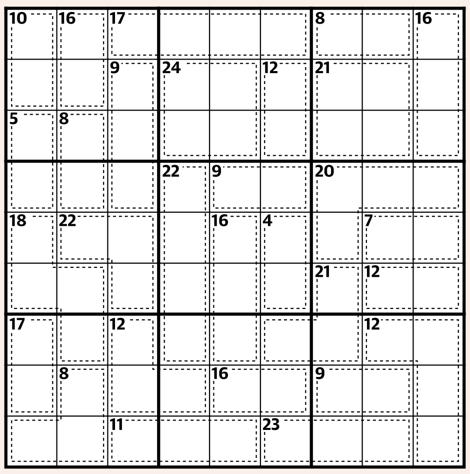
Killer sudoku

Easy

The normal rules of sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9. In addition, the digits in each inner shape (marked by dots) must add up to the number in the top corner of that box. No digit can be repeated within an inner shape.



Medium



Codeword

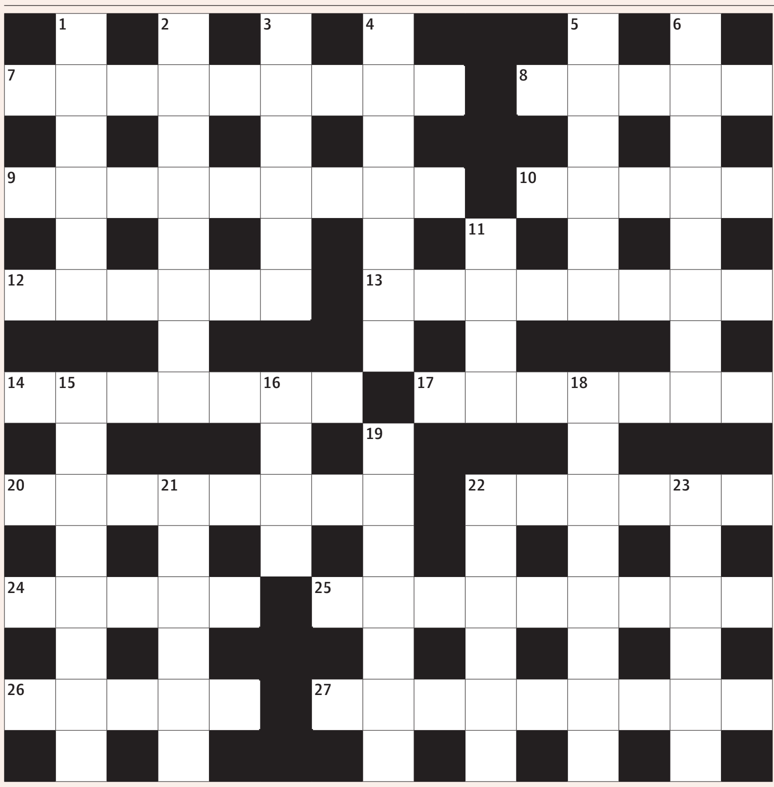
Each letter of the alphabet makes at least one appearance in the grid, and is represented by the same number wherever it appears. The letters decoded should help you to identify other letters and words in the grid.

3	11	21	22	1	■	24	10	20 O	21	17	11	12
10	■	22	■	14	■	22	■	3	■	2	■	2
14	19	26	14	15	16	21	■	6	20	14	4	17
11	■	■	■	11	■	17	■	14	■	■	■	22
15	14	3	2	21	17	■	11	26	22	23	22	26
4	■	2	■	22	■	11	■	21	■	15	■	22
■	3	10	2	13	21	10	4	■	12	22	26	11
17	■	10	■	■	■	21	■	■	■	25	■	13
18	20	23	17	■	26	11	16	17 S	22	25	14	■
14	■	20	■	3	■	15	■	20	■	10	■	22
15	14	8	11	22	13	■	9	2	14	14	13	17
22	■	■	■	1	■	2	■	15	■	■	■	10
24	2	13	8	22	■	15	14	26	4	26	10	14
24	■	20	■	13	■	8	■	14	■	20	■	21
17	14	15	5	22	26	14	■	17	26	20	7	17

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N ~~O~~ P Q R ~~S~~ T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 S	18	19	20 O	21	22	23	24	25	26

Guardian cryptic crossword No 29,172 set by Vulcan



Across

7 Event held in European chamber (4,5)
8 Sort of light in swamp (5)
9 A deterrent to sound triumphant after false alarm (9)
10 Climber putting back a spike (5)
12 As sported by the sunburnt sailor? (6)
13 Wealth with no cash around extremely unusual (8)
14 Restraint shed, starts to look excited (7)
17 Bishop endured being cursed (7)
20 End of game occupying the whole day? (4,4)
22 Just like a prick to be mean (6)
24 Switch offers resistance: turn key (5)
25 I vet Pope's redesigned headgear (9)
26 Nice-looking book about US state (5)
27 Clinics suddenly increase, extraordinary rise (9)

Down

1 Entry by Catholic in royal almanac fooled you (6)
2 Obsessive, I re-count change (8)
3 Dance the South African government repeatedly holds (6)
4 Not-so-soft drink, sort of cola, given to Dad (7)
5 Girl is a sweet little thing, head to toe (6)
6 Coastal road strange choice for navy to enter (8)
11 Ponder needing to warm wine (4)
15 Use photo for repairing roof (8)
16 Den left to ventilate (4)
18 Unstable, like some footwear? (8)
19 Horseman's cold nature when drunk (7)
21 Found out officer's about to make money (6)
22 Wild to stop spending, hoarding silver (6)
23 Person going on errands heard an animal that burrows (6)

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August bank holiday cryptic crossword

Solution No. 29,159

B	O	I	L	E	D	O	V	E	R	■	A	M	M	A	N	■	F	R	I	A	R	S
O	■	D	■	M	■	N	■	N	■	P	■	E	■	S	■	S	■	E	■	S	■	E
D	R	I	B	B	L	E	■	F	L	O	R	A	■	S	P	O	L	I	A	T	E	D
I	■	O	■	R	■	M	■	I	■	S	■	N	■	A	■	F	■	G	■	A	■	E
C	A	M	P	A	N	I	L	E	■	T	E	S	T	U	D	O	■	N	A	I	R	N
E	■	■	■	C	■	N	■	L	■	U	■	T	■	L	■	R	■	O	■	R	■	T
■	S	A	X	E	■	U	N	D	E	R	W	E	N	T	■	T	A	F	F	E	T	A
H	■	R	■	R	■	T	■	■	■	E	■	S	■	■	■	H	■	T	■	■	■	R
E	A	R	L	Y	Y	E	A	R	S	■	S	T	O	P	S	■	H	E	Y	D	A	Y
M	■	I	■	■	■	■	■	A	■	■	■	I	■	E	■	U	■	R	■	E	■	■
S	A	V	O	N	A	R	O	L	A	■	U	N	I	L	E	V	E	R	■	B	A	D
I	■	I	■	O	■	O	■	E	■	K	■	G	■	O	■	E	■	O	■	E	■	E
N	I	S	■	R	E	M	A	I	N	E	D	■	S	T	L	A	W	R	E	N	C	E
■	■	T	■	T	■	E	■	G	■	N	■	■	■	O	■	■	■	■	■	T	■	P
R	E	E	C	H	O	■	R	H	O	N	E	■	O	N	S	C	H	E	D	U	L	E
O	■	■	■	A	■	A	■	■	■	E	■	N	■	■	■	A	■	L	■	R	■	N
T	R	I	M	M	E	D	■	B	U	T	T	E	R	F	A	T	■	E	X	E	S	■
T	■	C	■	E	■	E	■	A	■	H	■	W	■	I	■	A	■	V	■	■	■	T
E	M	E	E	R	■	M	O	N	T	H	L	Y	■	S	O	M	M	E	L	I	E	R
R	■	D	■	I	■	A	■	N	■	O	■	E	■	C	■	A	■	N	■	N	■	E
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A	■	E	■	A	■	N	■	R	■	N	■	R	■	E	■	A	■	E	■	G	■	T
M	E	A	R	N	S	■	E	S	K	E	R	■	G	R	I	N	D	S	T	O	N	E

The bank holiday cryptic crossword winners of The Language Lover's Puzzle Book are: Gus & Linda, Otley; Guy Stubbs, Beeston; Elaine Webster, Dalkeith; David White, Reading; G Carpenter, Edinburgh; Vanessa Fellner, Austria; Janet Hargreaves, Arnside; Michael Syrotinski, Glasgow, Esther Jones, Romsey; Rob Leay, Ashtead.

Cryptic crossword

Solution No. 29,165

E	■	F	■	S	■	F	■	G	■	P	■	M	■	O
P	L	A	T	E	■	R	O	O	S	E	V	E	L	T
I	■	V	■	R	■	A	■	T	■	R	■	E	■	I
C	H	A	F	F	I	N	C	H	■	C	O	M	I	C
■	■	B	■	■	■	K	■	I	■	E	■	I	■	■
S	T	E	N	C	I	L	■	C	O	P	P	E	R	S
U	■	A	■	O	■	I	■	■	■	T	■	■	■	U
M	I	N	I	M	■	N	E	W	■	I	D	E	A	L
A	■	■	■	M	■	■	■	A	■	O	■	M	■	L
C	O	U	R	I	E	R	■	C	E	N	T	U	R	Y
■	■	N	■	S	■	O	■	K	■	■	■	L	■	■
T	I	M	E	S	■	M	A	I	N	S	T	A	Y	S
I	■	A	■	I	■	A	■	E	■	A	■	T	■	A
D	I	S	C	O	U	N	T	S	■	L	I	E	I	N
Y	■	K	■	N	■	S	■	T	■	E	■	D	■	S

This week's winners are: Nina Elliott-Ashford, York; Brian Gray, Woodford Green; Marianne Croll, Derby; Mayya Bondareu Skaya, London; Philip Watkins, Cardiff.

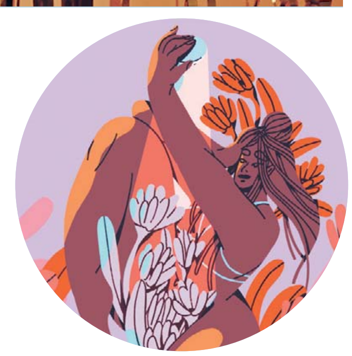
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Life & Arts

If it ain’t broke ...
Why fix the vaginal microbiome?
page 4



Jeffrey Eugenides
How I wrote The Virgin Suicides
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A new start after 60



I left London and launched a magazine

Mich Maroney has always known what she wanted. As a little girl, she loved painting and told her family she was going to be an artist. "I was so young that I didn't even know what it meant," she says. "But my dad had this huge book on art and suddenly I knew, yes, this is what I'm going to do."

Maroney, 61, was born in Hong Kong to a British father and a Macanese mother. When she was eight, the family moved to London, where she later worked as a visual artist and supported herself with administrative jobs.

Six years ago, she moved to Skibbereen in West Cork. "At the time, I was in an intense NHS role as one of my side jobs and knew I'd get ill if I carried on," she says. She decided she had to leave England. "I'd lived in Ireland before and liked it. It was a moment of absolute clarity. I needed more headspace to get away and focus on my art."

In lockdown, she turned to creative writing for the first time. "I had written about my own work before, for funding applications, but had always wanted to write more creatively," she says. "I got on to a Cork County Libraries course for writers who hadn't written before." After falling in love with it, she joined the Cork Prose Collective, a group of writers who meet regularly to discuss their latest ideas. Living alone throughout the lockdowns, meeting with other writers over video calls became her outlet.

When she turned 60 last year, Maroney decided it was time for the next big challenge - she wanted to set up a literary and arts magazine. With the support of the writers she had met, her local print shop and a simple design programme, she began to teach herself the basics of publishing. "There was so much brilliant writing that I thought it was a shame we didn't have a wider audience for it. That's why I decided to put it all together in a magazine." Anyone who wanted to submit stories and poetry was welcome to do so.

Swerve magazine was born in 2022. It was formally launched at the West Cork literary festival, where contributors held a roundtable discussion and an exhibition of images.

The magazine, which is published in print annually and available online, was inspired by a publication that Maroney had picked up from a shop in London many years earlier. "It was the last edition of a beautiful magazine which came out of Paris in 1940, full of amazing illustrations and a celebration of French culture in the face of totalitarianism. I'd always thought it would be lovely to start a magazine, but it seemed such a ridiculous idea."

But she needn't have doubted herself. This year, Maroney has widened the scope of the magazine to include an artist-writer collaboration, as well as interviews and articles by visual artists. She has also set up a small gallery where artists can share more experimental work. "Nothing like that existed in Skibbereen," she says.

In addition, she has turned part of her cottage into a space for an artists' residency programme, which launched this year. "The first person to stay was from France and she was very interested in the environment," says Maroney. "I arranged for her to visit an organic farm, which has inspired her work. She produced a series of works in France and then came to show it at the arts festival in July."

Works such as this will feature in the next edition of the magazine, which Maroney is already working to improve. "My next step is to seek funding and to teach myself how to use InDesign, which is the industry standard," she says. While the magazine is connected to her life as an artist, the world of publishing and writing still feels new and exciting. "I am using a different part of my brain to write and produce a magazine. Writing is difficult in a lot of ways, but it's a great way to find out about yourself. It helps me to explore the world."

Lizzie Cernik

Has your life taken a new direction after the age of 60? Fill in the online form at theguardian.com/new-start-after-60

PHOTOGRAPH: SARAH KATE MURPHY/THE GUARDIAN

Emma Beddington



HRT is great. But how long until it turns me into a better person?

I've finally joined the cool girls on HRT. It honestly does feel a bit like that, for which I thank the many mid-life activists, academics, healthcare professionals and influencers who have helped to shift perspectives over the past few years.

Obviously, women have been talking about their bastard hormones for ever, and particular respect and gratitude are due to those who did so decades before the more accepting present. But being perimenopausal has had a serious glow up. It's being reframed as your prime - less vaginal atrophy and incontinence, more Davina McCall with a six-pack and Bridget Christie in biker leathers (in her meno-comedy The Change). There is more media coverage, there are more high-profile women discussing their experiences and, inevitably, more commodification: once Goop starts targeting libido supplements at your phase of life, it has become, if not aspirational, at least not something you have to whisper about on the top deck of the bus, in case Alan Bennett might be eavesdropping. I doubt I would have written about this here five years ago, so something has definitely changed.

I'm 48 and have looked on wistfully over recent years as women of my acquaintance entered their six-pack phase. It has been inspiring and, honestly, a little envy-inducing. Indeed, what finally pushed me to act - rather than the anxiety that made opening my computer feel like having my ribcage pulled from my chest by a panther, the insomnia, or the confusion that makes me write more slowly than a medieval monk - was Nina Stibbe's forthcoming diaries. I love Nina Stibbe and she loves HRT; it stopped her "chanting Oh God Oh God Oh God Oh God quietly under my breath the whole time", apparently. Sold. I booked an appointment with a GP (not Gwyneth Paltrow, possibly the only person harder to see than a British general practitioner in 2023).

> Am I still in a seething rage about the bins? Very much so

And not before time. When the doctor asked why I was there, I couldn't form a simple sentence (I think I said something like, "brain, bad she, I maybe, hormone?" then stared at her pleadingly) and my anxiety-induced blood pressure was worrisome. I got my HRT.

So now I have two tubes of Oestrogel I'm flashing about faux-casually like a Chanel Les Exclusifs fragrance. I say that because, in the past few years, HRT supply-chain issues have given these medications the cachet of an exceptionally limited edition (while Viagra is … let me check my notes … now available over the counter). Meno-chic would be aided by cooler packaging and delivery mechanisms, I feel (a sleek HRT vape? Shots? A chic pendant full of powder snorted with a tiny spoon?), but even the basic pump-action tube makes me feel I have entered a new, exciting phase of life.

It's only been two weeks, so presumably I'm not experiencing the full effect yet. Somehow I haven't developed Davina's abs; is that next month? Even so, it feels like crunch time because, for several years, I've attributed all my angry, confused and irrational impulses to my depleted oestrogen reserves. Once those are replenished, what is left is my midlife personality. Time to confront the question: menopausal or just an arsehole?

It's not looking great so far. I am less anxious. Or rather, I still think catastrophe is imminent, but don't care as much. However, that seems to be where the behavioural benefits end. Am I still in an absolute seething rage about the bins? Very much so. Has there been a decline in passive-aggressive conduct around cupboard organisation or lunch detritus on worktops? Not noticeably. Have I phased out hissed phrases such as "in this house" and "Why does no one … ?" Nope. Do I still jab Capital FM off in a fury, saying: "How on earth can you listen to this?" Within a nanosecond.

Worse, when my unreasonable behaviour causes confrontation, I can't attribute it self-righteously to my hormones, a serious side-effect I hadn't anticipated. Midlife is a period of self-discovery and reappraisal, and the self I'm discovering and reappraising seems to still need a ton of work. It's just HRT, I suppose, not magic.

Sleep, luck and takeaways – the secret to marital bliss

The secret to a long relationship? Have sex seven times a month and never go to bed angry, according to a survey of 2,000 British couples commissioned for the launch of Love & Death on ITVX, a show about an affair and an axe killing. Of those surveyed, 20% thought liking the same TV programmes was important; will it tick their boxes?

My friends are sceptical, too. "People are still having sex? In this economy?" says one. "Oh, please," says another. "Maybe aim for not going to bed angry seven times a month. That's in my marriage how-to." Given how often insomnia leaves me wandering like an unquiet spirit, mine would be: "Try to sleep seven times a month in the same room." Or even just: "Try to sleep."

There were other answers, though it was mostly a soup of the generic and bleeding obvious. I can at least agree with the 10% who thought that "liking the same takeaways" was key.

I understand why people come up with these answers, but surely no one really knows? It is like asking centenarians the secret of their longevity. Is it olive oil, port and chocolate (Jeanne Calment: lived to 122 and only stopped smoking at 120) or eating lightly (Jiroemon Kimura, lived to 116)? Maths, or not getting angry? Why are you asking them? They have no idea!

My husband and I have known each other for almost 30 years and neither of us has the secret to anything (well, that's not strictly true: he can make pigs fall into a deep sleep by scratching them behind the ears). Despite me having the patience of a wounded honey badger, and our diametrically opposed attitudes to noise, sports and vinegar, we got lucky somehow. Isn't that what it mainly is? Dumb, happy luck? I'd like to see that as a survey response one day.





The pet I'll never forget
Tony the carthorse

Tony was a magnificent white carthorse who, every morning of my early childhood, knocked his head on our kitchen window for a sugar buttie - a thick piece of white sliced, thinly spread with margarine and dipped in sugar. How we must have loved that horse, as this was just a few years after the second world war ended, and sugar was still rationed.

Tony was one of a dozen or so horses looked after by my father, used to haul goods from Liverpool's docks to the various warehouses along the waterfront. He needed to be on hand continually, and so we lived in a tied house across the stable yard. Our home was a sort of unofficial refuge for lost, unwanted or injured animals, including a one-eyed cat, a neurotic dog and even a parrot that whistled Colonel Bogey, all rescued by my dad, who couldn't bear to turn an animal away. He'd inherited his job from his own father, who had also been a horsekeeper for many years.

Tony had had a narrow escape in 1941, when Hitler was doing his best to annihilate Liverpool's port. The peak of devastation came in May, when, for seven consecutive nights, bombers dropped many tonnes of high explosives.

> German bombs were raining down and the stable caught fire

Our home was just off the Dock Road, surrounded by timber yards and right in the target area. One night bombs were raining down, fires were blazing all around and, inevitably, the hayloft above the stable caught fire.

The horses were tied in their stalls and so my dad rushed into the burning building and released the terrified animals, which bolted off through the flame-filled streets. The next day, most found their own way home and my dad set off, with rope lariats over his shoulder, to find the others. All returned except Tony.

It was thought that maybe he had been crushed under collapsing masonry - like so many others that night.

Then, a little later, word came that a local coal merchant had a new dapple grey horse out delivering bags of nutty slack and such. Suspicious, my dad mounted a midnight raid on the coalman's stable and, sure enough, there stood his old pal, coal dust artfully rubbed into his lovely white coat. He came home to a very warm welcome and I guess that was when the sugar buttie routine started. He remained a favourite and was always first for the warm bran mash treat that I loved to help with on Saturday mornings. I still remember the gentle nuzzles from his velvety nose, and the rides around the stableyard on his enormous wide back, my five- or six-year-old legs sticking out almost horizontally.

Marilyn Rowley

COVER: DAVID LEVENE/THE GUARDIAN
PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

‘If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is …’



Probiotics are being touted as a fix for many vaginal problems. But does the ‘microbiome’ really need this kind of help? **Mabel Banfield-Nwachi** reports

‘Us girls, we have a lot of problems down there and it’s an absolute nightmare,” one influencer says on TikTok, like a seasoned teleshopping host. She reels off a list that includes thrush, bacterial vaginosis (BV) and urinary tract infections - common issues that many women are too shy, insecure or squeamish to talk about. But she has an answer to these woes: vaginal probiotic pills. These are being touted on the social media site as magical new supplements that can improve the health of your vaginal microbiome.

But what is the vaginal microbiome? And does it need to be fixed? According to Ina Schuppe Koistinen, an associate professor at the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden and an expert in the subject, the term refers to the gene content of the microbes in that area of the body. “You can also call it the vaginal microbiota - or vaginal flora - and it means all the microbes that are present. That’s bacteria, but also viruses, fungi and all kinds of single-cell organisms.” We all have microbiota in other parts of the body, too, including on the skin and in the gut. The health of the microbiome is determined by the delicate balance of microbes.

A healthy vaginal microbiome would be dominated by lactobacilli, especially the species called lactobacillus crispatus. These bacteria are our first protection against infections. They help keep the pH of the organ low (yes, vaginas have their own pH, usually somewhere between 3.8 and 4.5) and create an environment that is hostile to other pathogenic bacteria that might knock the microbiome out of balance and cause infections such as BV and thrush.

Infections arise when this careful balance of bacteria is upset. The main culprits? Fragranced soaps, harsh detergents and antibiotics, which can kill off the “good” as well as the “bad” lactobacilli. Unprotected sex also exposes you to bacteria in other people’s microbiomes; the more partners, the more potential varieties. Smoking can have an effect, too, because it can reduce the prevalence of the bacterium that protects the area from infection, meaning your chances of developing thrush or BV increase.

“Most women have small amounts of fungi in their vaginas, but when they take over it can cause a fungal infection like thrush,” Schuppe Koistinen says. “Semen has a neutral pH and adds nutrients to the vagina that make bacteria other than

> **The vagina is a self-cleaning organ. It has its own way of keeping the balance**

lactobacilli grow and take over." Menstrual blood can also affect and raise the pH level, making the environment less favourable for lactobacilli and leading to an unbalanced microbiota.

Back to the probiotics being touted on social media. You can see why products claiming to "support the vaginal flora" or "restore the natural environment in the vagina" might be popular. But do they deliver?

"Most probiotics you can buy are not tested in clinical trials for what they are supposed to do," says Schuppe Koistinen. "They are commonly used bacterial strains that are easy to produce and sell." Probiotics, found in some foods and often taken as supplements, are live bacteria that are thought to increase the variety of microscopic organisms in different parts of the body. They are marketed to help with a range of health problems, from bloating to vaginal odour, but the science behind them is ambiguous.

There are, Schuppe Koistinen says, no probiotics available that contain the species of lactobacillus that scientists have identified as supporting good vaginal health. These kinds of products contain lactobacillus plantarum, lactobacillus rhamnosus and bifidobacterium animalis lactis – not commonly found in the vagina and probably derived from the gut or found in fermented foods, she says. Even if these did end up in the right place, they probably wouldn't thrive there and would most likely die. "The commercial companies selling these probiotics are very smart … but until there are studies that show real, significant effects, a very big part of it is probably a placebo effect," she says.

"If something sounds too good to be true, it usually is," says Dr Jen Gunter, a gynaecologist and the author of The Vagina Bible. "If there were a magical supplement to solve myriad vaginal problems, we would prescribe it. If something is making any kind of quasi-health claim and it's not approved by a regulatory board, then those claims are highly suspect."

Keeping vaginas happy might sound like a minefield, but often what works is leaving them to do what they do best: clean and protect themselves naturally. "The vagina is a self-cleaning organ. It has its own way of keeping the balance," says Michelle Swer, a consultant gynaecologist. This means you should avoid douching – trying to clean inside the vagina – because it can harm this balance, or exacerbate an existing problem. The vulva, on the outside, can be cleaned "with water and a mild soap only".

Vaginas have an inbuilt "plasticity": if the microbiome is disrupted, it can usually correct itself. "We are all made for having menses and sex, so if you have a healthy microbiome, it tends to go back to its normal conditions," says Schuppe Koistinen. "If you live a healthy life and eat well, sleep well and have safe sex, then you normally don't even have to think about it."

There are, however, small changes you can make. Using a menstrual cup instead of a tampon or a pad can help, because it "catches" blood from higher up in the vagina, so blood doesn't sit for long periods of time. Using condoms for the first few months of sex with a new partner can also limit the effects that contact with other bacteria can have on the microbiome. Introducing more fermented foods, such as sauerkraut, kimchi, kefir and kombucha, can be beneficial.

Schuppe Koistinen notes that poor education about women's health also plays a part. "As young girls, we don't learn how a healthy vagina should look and smell and how we should take care of it. In schools, we talk about the anatomy of your organs, but we don't talk about the best way to take care of your menses, what type of pain is normal, what is not normal and all these things," she says. "We don't talk about it because there's still a stigma around it."

According to Forbes, only about 1% of healthcare research and innovation is invested in female conditions beyond oncology. "There is very little interest to invest in research on women's health. If we had spent the money that has been spent on erectile dysfunction on developing drugs for BV, we would have them," says Schuppe Koistinen.

If something doesn't feel right down there, rather than looking for a quick fix on the internet or seeking advice from influencers, women should talk to a doctor, Gunter says. "People struggle to get the right diagnosis and try all sorts of things," she says. "I understand that. But I'm also very angry that [some people] take advantage of that."

ILLUSTRATION: KIKA KLAT/THE GUARDIAN



Holly Golightly (Audrey Hepburn) in Breakfast at Tiffany's

Should I worry about … sharing a bed with my pet?

As a species, we have been sleeping alongside our four-legged friends since … well, no one is entirely sure, but certainly long before modern bedtime routines emerged. The first real beds appeared about 4,000 years ago, while the domestication of dogs began at least 20,000 years before that, with our canine companions working as a combination of predator deterrent and hot-water bottle.

These days, there are very few roaming wolves, and we have duvets and heated blankets to keep us warm. So, is it possible that letting dogs – or cats – share our sleeping space is doing us more harm than good?

> If you start letting your dog sleep beside you, you can't expect it to understand when that stops

The short answer is: probably not. "I don't think there's anything to worry about," says Esme Wheeler, a dog welfare expert at the RSCPA who – in the interest of full disclosure – lets her dog sleep on the bed. "There might be some tiny risks in terms of disease transmission, or fleas, but if you're living with a dog anyway, having it in the bed isn't going to increase the risk of that.

"If you're a light sleeper, it might be a little bit disruptive to your sleep, as dogs have different sleep patterns from humans – they can be hyperalert, so they're listening out for things and sometimes they will get up suddenly, which can be a problem."

How problematic is this sort of sleep disruption? Perhaps surprisingly, there isn't enough research to make strong recommendations, and the results of studies are mixed.

One national survey of Australians found that dog and cat owners were generally less likely to be on medication for sleeping difficulties than non-owners – although the survey didn't ask specific questions about co-sleeping and the direction of causality is not clear. A more recent study, which used accelerometers to measure sleep quality in humans and their co-sleeping canines, found that, although having a dog in the room had little effect on sleep, an animal on the bed led to decreased sleep efficiency for its owners.

In other surveys, some pet owners reported that their pets were disruptive, while others described them as being beneficial. Overall, inconclusive. But if you are not noticing the effects on a daily basis, then you probably don't have much to worry about.

But what about the dogs? This is where things get a bit trickier, as our faithful pets find it difficult to understand when sleeping arrangements change, or why.

"The thing to be aware of is consistency," says Wheeler. "If you start letting your dog sleep on the bed, you can't expect it to understand when it's suddenly not allowed to any more. If you're going to do it, you either need to do it and continue it or teach the dog that they can come on to the bed at certain times – perhaps there's a stimulus that represents that, such as a special blanket." This can be especially important if your relationship status changes – if a partner vetoes your canine co-sleeping arrangements, you will need to gently retrain your dog.

It is worth noting that, as your dog ages, it may become less able to get up or down from the bed. To reduce stress in later years, it is a good idea for them to have their own sleeping space.

It is important to remember that dogs and children should not be left alone together in sleeping spaces. "No matter how used to dogs a child is – and vice versa – it is essential for an adult to be actively involved and closely supervising at all times when they are together," says the Dogs Trust.

And what about cats? There aren't as many studies here, as co-sleeping felines tend to be less common. "Cats have had a shorter domestication journey than dogs," says Wheeler. "Dogs have co-evolved with humans and some people would say they have domesticated us as much as we have them. That is not to say that cats are not capable of forming close attachments to humans, of course." Still, most of the advice above still seems to apply – and cats, like dogs, can reduce the stress hormone cortisol. Reptiles, though? It's a strong no.

Joel Snape

'There is no fear – I don't be

As Strictly returns, judge Craig Revel Horwood tells **Emine Saner** about playing the baddie, his alcoholic father and dancing his way to happiness



It is already way past working hours, yet you can feel the Strictly Come Dancing machine still whirring. At the studios where the BBC dance competition will take place over the next few months, boxes of hairpieces are piled in the corridor, the lights are on around the mirrors in the makeup room, rails of sequinned dresses in frothy chiffon seem to jostle for a writhing body to fill them and is that one of the male pro-dancers bouncing up the stairs topless? On the way to Craig Revel Horwood's dressing room, I get a glimpse of fellow judge Anton Du Beke. He is, as you would expect, wearing a glittery tuxedo. If you have been watching Strictly for any of its 19-year run, it all feels both weirdly familiar and otherworldly.

At first, Revel Horwood didn't think Strictly would take off. "We were making it up as we went along and changing it constantly," he says, from his dressing-room sofa. He looks fit and youthful, dressed in a sleeveless athletics top and shorts. "But then it won the hearts and minds of the nation."

A choreographer and director in the West End, Revel Horwood had been brought in as a fourth judge at the last minute and he is one of the show's last survivors, alongside presenter Tess Daly and Du Beke. How long will he do it for? "I don't have any intention of leaving." He loves what he calls his "Saturday job", and how inclusive it is, as a mainstream show. "It does teach the world that it's OK to be different. It's OK to wear heels; it's OK for men to wear pink sequins."

Strictly's celebrities have been diverse in terms of age, ethnicity and size. Paralympians often compete, such as Ellie Simmonds, as do celebrities including George Webster, the TV presenter who has Down's syndrome and appeared in the 2022 Christmas special; the winner of the 2021 series, the actor Rose Ayling-Ellis, is deaf. Revel Horwood, who has appeared on the show in drag, was one of the driving forces behind allowing celebrities to compete with a same-sex partner. "A lot of people in the ballroom world didn't want that to happen, but often [in dance classes] there aren't enough men so women have to dance with each other anyway." And there were some same-sex competitions in the dance world, he says. "I think Strictly proved that you can introduce something like that and people will accept it."

Famously the harshest critic, it was a role he created almost instantly. "The first words out of my mouth were 'dull, dull, dull', and everyone booed and I was branded." He smiles. "I never tried to be that, I was just being honest, but there's not a lot of time in television to do all the niceties along with it. Plus, that's not my job as a judge. I have to tell it as I see it."

Now fans appreciate his deadpan insults, and age – he is 58 – seems to have given him the air of an eternally disappointed headteacher, rather than a waspish upstart. But early on, he would receive hate mail and abuse in the street. Did that bother him? "No, because I don't really care what people think. I challenge them to judge it themselves, and if they do, they generally agree with me." In earlier series, he would go too far. In his memoir, All Balls and Glitter, he says he was made to apologise to previous contestants Patsy Palmer and Julian Clary for comments that were too personal. Do other celebrities take criticism badly? "Oh, lots of them. They might pretend not to, but no one likes criticism. I never liked it, but you have to accept it, and then try to use that criticism to be better." Comedians tend to be the worst, he says, and actors and athletes are either used to it, or thrive on it.

One of the things I find most interesting is when the most reserved celebrities start to peel off the layers of inhibition. Can you be a good dancer if you don't have that freedom of personality? "You can, you just have to be taught to release it. If you self-judge, you will always freeze." It's down to, he says, "not worrying about what people think. There is no fear, I don't believe in fear." Dancing is natural for humans, he adds: "Dance comes before language. It's about the rhythm of getting on or off a train. That's just rhythm in life."

> **No one likes criticism. I never did. But you have to accept it and use it to be better**

Does he really have no fear? He used to, he says. At school, he was terrified by the prospect of having to read aloud. "Through fear you can close down. That has happened to me – stage fright – and it's just stupid." He learned that making a mistake was not the end of the world. As a director, in rehearsal: "I try to eliminate [fear] from people's minds, because that's where true creativity comes from. There are people who can't do that because of their upbringing, their psychological welfare, but I try to encourage people not to respond to fear."

Revel Horwood was the second of five children and was born in Ballarat in Victoria, Australia; his father was a navy lieutenant, so the family moved around a lot, including a couple of years in the UK. As a result he found it hard to hold on to friends, but it also set him up for the nomadic life he has led since – touring, or doing shows in different countries. "I don't particularly call anywhere home," he says (officially, home is in Northamptonshire with his fiance, Jonathan, a horticulturist and trainee paramedic; they met in 2018 on Tinder). Strictly, he says, has been the "only constant, really, in my life".

His father was an alcoholic, and abusive; Revel Horwood's mother experienced the worst of it, and the children knew to stay out of his way. "That was why I enjoyed dancing so much, because I was away from the house – it wasn't a happy home." It must have been frightening as a

PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVID LEVENE/THE GUARDIAN; GETTY; SHUTTERSTOCK

elieve in it'







With the then Duchess of Cornwall on a school visit, 2009; (right) choreographing Bonheur!, Paris, 2003



With fellow Strictly judges Shirley Ballas and Bruno Tonioli, 2020

child. "We escaped," he says with a grim smile. "We knew after the seventh beer what was going to happen and to go to our rooms, go do something else. I wouldn't hang around. My mum couldn't really do anything about it. He'd change from one minute to the next. So dancing, for me, was an escape."

As a child, he loved to dress up and perform with his older sister at happier family gatherings. "I liked the double doors opening," he says of the frosted glass sliding doors that were his version of curtain-up. "The adults used to encourage us and you'd get applause; it just created a really nice atmosphere."

Once, his father was furious that his seven-year-old son had essentially performed in drag, and it wasn't easy to be a teenage boy going to dance classes in smalltown Australia. "You'd be called a 'pansy', a 'poofter', everything under the sun." Revel Horwood kept it secret. "Even me doing home economics instead of woodwork was frowned on because I was quite effeminate - not that I knew I was, but I liked [playing] the recorder and I hated sport." He was called homophobic names and threatened with violence; bullied for being overweight and teased for being in the recorder group. "Luckily, my music teacher was the best inspiration. She gave me the confidence to continue with music."

Questioning his sexuality - he had girlfriends, and in his 20s he was married to a woman for two years - Revel Horwood internalised a lot of shame. "I was completely homophobic," he says. "But when I went to the theatre and did my first dance class, the people there were lovely and praised me. I liked those people, and I knew I didn't like people at school. I was traumatised at school, but dance released that."

Revel Horwood was 15 when he left home and eventually got a job at a TV station as a trainee cameraman. When he was 16, an older colleague in his 40s began to pursue him and proposed a deal: he would take Revel Horwood on a trip for six weeks, which would include shows in London and New York, and would pay for his dance classes, in return for a sexual relationship. In his 2009 memoir, Revel Horwood writes that it was "a business arrangement" and one that, at the age of 17, he felt in control of, but I wonder if conversations in recent years about exploitation have made him reconsider the "relationship"? "No," he says. "I didn't feel it was wrong. It wasn't rent on the corner of the street. It was a sugar daddy relationship, simple as. I got something from it and he got something from it, and then we went our separate ways. It could have been worse, I suppose. He was supportive of everything I was doing, dance-wise, and getting me through difficult times. It was a learning experience, it taught me a lot and it wasn't abusive in any way."

The trip and the shows changed his life. Seeing Cats in London, and then on Broadway, cemented his dream to become a professional performer. Back in Australia, he moved to Melbourne. "I just kept auditioning and doing anything I could - teaching aerobics, moving house every five minutes, sofa surfing." Plagued by body issues as a teenager, he developed an eating disorder. It happens to a lot of dancers, he says. "They do undereat. Now they're encouraged to eat more, but you look in the mirror and compare your body [to other dancers]." Getting cast in West Side Story, his first big professional job, was a defining moment, followed by a role in La Cage aux Folles in 1985 (he had also developed a drag act, Lavish).

"I was completely homophobic. Then I went to the theatre and did my first dance class ...

Around that time, Australia's Aids crisis was peaking, along with the stigma. La Cage aux Folles closed early. "Audiences were not coming because it had two men falling in love and was full of drag queens." He is still shocked that people could have thought it was possible to contract HIV from sitting in an audience. "Everyone called it the gay plague. A lot of my friends died. They were 21 or 22 and hadn't even lived their lives. I sometimes wonder: how did I escape? I just thought: what is the world turning into? We are human beings, and it's a human disease, not just a gay one, but they wanted to brand it. So the show closed after three months."

Revel Horwood's work took him to Paris, then London, where he settled. For several years, he worked for the impresario Cameron Mackintosh, until he went it alone. Was he not scared that his career would be over? "Yeah, but I didn't care. I'll start again, do something else." He says he still thinks like that. "If I get sacked from this," he says, looking around his Strictly dressing room, "I'll do something else. With Cameron, it did me the world of good because I was forced to start again." It was hard - that first year, he earned so little he couldn't afford a mobile phone, but it forced him, he says, to develop "bolshiness and confidence".

These days, Revel Horwood doesn't stop - he points to a schedule on his wall that reminds him where he is supposed to be, and when. Throughout most of the Strictly run, he is also performing as Miss Hannigan in the touring production of Annie, then as Cinderella's wicked stepmother in panto, and he often directs shows too. He created the life he wanted and now seems far from the bullied and traumatised teenager. The "gear change", as he calls it, was getting his first theatre job - he couldn't believe he would be paid for something he would do for nothing. "I just went: 'That's it - this is going to happen now for the rest of my life. I want it to happen.'"

Strictly Come Dancing starts on Saturday at 6.35pm on BBC One and BBC iPlayer

Tragedy in suburbia

He was going nowhere as a writer. Then a shocking chat with a babysitter changed everything. **Jeffrey Eugenides** relives how he wrote his modern classic The Virgin Suicides


Unknowable ... the Lisbon sisters in the 1999 film adaptation

Although I'd decided to be a writer at the age of 16, I was never in a rush to get published. Virginia Woolf said that no one should publish a novel before he or she turns 30, and that seemed about right to me. Skip the callow, autobiographical coming-of-age novel, along with any signs of apprenticeship. Bide your time, get better at your craft, and publish something unembarrassing in the early years of your maturity.

That philosophy stood me in good stead through my 20s. But as my 30th birthday approached, I began to feel uneasy. "What do you do?" people asked at New York cocktail parties. "I'm a writer." "Anything I might have seen?" When I mentioned the one story I'd placed in an obscure literary magazine, my interlocutors nodded uncertainly and drifted away.

Why hadn't I published a novel? It wasn't for lack of trying. By then I'd started and failed to finish at least three novels. I'd written dozens of short stories. Everything I'd laboured on had met with rejection or, as with most of what I write, even now, had been rejected by my own internal editor, so that no one had read a word except for me.

It's axiomatic that a writer who can't get published has no idea why. If you knew what the problem was, you'd fix it. In my case, the problem was compounded by its paradoxical nature: it stemmed from an avoidance of the self and a fixation on it. Most of the stuff I wrote as an undergraduate or thereafter wasn't autobiographical in any way. I wrote stories from the point of view of a Trappist monk, or of Ezra Pound while he was imprisoned in a cage following his fascist radio broadcasts during the second world war. Perfectly good ideas for stories, maybe, if I had been a monk or Ezra Pound.

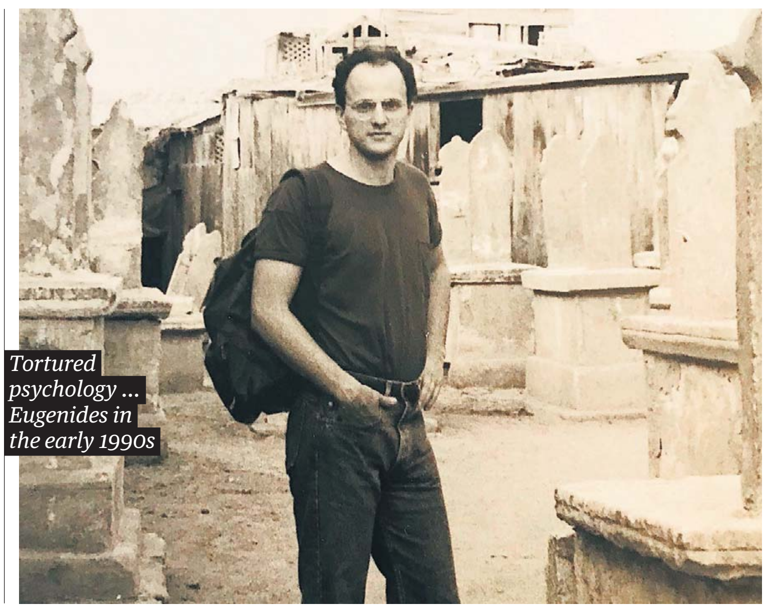
When I did try to write about my own psychology, I made it more tortured than it was. Without being aware of it, I'd adopted an existentialist view of the human condition. The struggle my heroes were engaged in was the struggle of the self against the void. They didn't have families. They weren't from anywhere. If they had names at all, the names were never Greek.

Then one night, on a trip home to Detroit, I got talking to the teenage girl who was babysitting my one-year-old nephew. She was a chatty midwestern girl, seemingly untroubled by life, but in the span of our brief conversation, which didn't last more than five minutes, she told me, out of the blue, that she and her sisters had all attempted suicide. Shocked, I asked why. "I don't know," she said. "We just had a lot of pressure." That was as much as I learned before my sister-in-law brought in the baby and my family and I left for dinner. I never spoke to the girl again.

The nature of suicide - its suddenness, its violence, its impenetrability - had been impressed on me some 12 years earlier during my freshman year at college. One of the courses I took was called Introduction to Eastern Religions. It was a big lecture class where we sat and took notes. At our weekly sessions, however, we got to discuss the material, and my enthusiasm for the subject matter - I was keen, in those days, on synthesising eastern and western religion - convinced one of the other students that I knew what I was talking about. Enough, at least, that one day he showed up at my dorm room door, unannounced.

He wanted answers to the big questions. Did God exist? What was the meaning of life? I invited him into my room, but he stayed in the doorway, staring at me with his big eyes. He seemed a little intense, frantic to know the truth, but that wasn't so unusual at college. I told him what I could, which was next to nothing, and he went on his way. The next day, at the restaurant where he worked part-time, he picked up a Yanagiba sushi knife from the counter and disembowelled himself. Only when I learned of my classmate's suicide did I recognise the state of desperation in which he'd come to see me. He'd been hoping that I might give him a reason to keep living. And I'd missed it completely.

After I returned to New York, I kept thinking about my


Tortured psychology ... Eugenides in the early 1990s

PHOTOGRAPHS: PARAMOUNT PICTURES/SPORTSPHOTO/ALLSTAR; JEFFREY EUGENIDES

> **Readers from Brazil and Japan saw their own towns in mine**

conversation with the babysitter. The story of a group of sisters who, for mysterious reasons, decide to end their lives en masse, seemed to me a compelling idea for a novel. Nevertheless, as I had no idea how to write such a book - or, apparently, any book - that was as far as it went.

Over a year passed. Then, the following winter, fleeing New York and my arrested literary development, I took a trip to Egypt. My girlfriend at the time and I spent a few days in Cairo, visiting the pyramids at Giza and viewing mummies in the Egyptian Museum. After that we boarded a smallish boat with 30 other passengers for a cruise down the Nile.

One evening after sitting out on deck, watching the palm trees and villages pass by, I went down to our cabin and wrote what became the first paragraph of The Virgin Suicides. That paragraph gave me the whole novel. It gave me its first-person plural voice, which was extremely rare at the time, so rare that subsequent reviewers of the book claimed that I'd invented it, which I hadn't. It gave me the plot, announcing in its opening sentence that all five Lisbon sisters had committed suicide in the space of single a year. And it made clear that the collective narrator of the book - the unspecified group of men remembering the events of their adolescence - wasn't in full possession of the facts. In order to know anything about the Lisbon girls, the boys have to talk to people, to snoop in the girls' diaries, to spy on them, and to replay in their minds the few occasions when the girls interacted directly with them.

When you're writing your first book, it helps to give yourself limits. I didn't have the capacity as a writer back then to go into the girls' heads and present their inner lives. By renouncing omniscience, I reduced the complexity of what I needed to know. A good thing, given that my resources were limited.

The other thing the perspective did was to turn my attention outward. Although I knew little about my own psychology, I knew a lot about my childhood neighbourhood and what had happened on our street. I'd grown up going into my friends' houses and seeing what life was like inside. It was a form of omniscience in itself, achieved not through the sudden acquisition of Tolstoyan powers of insight, but by the simple virtue of having lived in one place and paid attention.

Ironically, in writing about an environment I'd considered unworthy of literary depiction, I came up with something that interested readers for the first time. In literature, you reach the universal through the particular. I may have been writing about an unnamed suburb in Michigan during the 1970s, but when the book came out, readers from the Netherlands, Brazil, Japan, the UK and elsewhere told me they recognised their own villages and towns.

I wrote this book before I became "a writer". No one was waiting for it. No one cared if I finished or not. It was composed in the purest of states, written in snatches at my desk at my nine-to-five office job, for two hours on week nights, and four hours every Saturday and Sunday.

Not long ago, I received an email from a high-school English teacher in New Jersey. He told me that he'd been assigning The Virgin Suicides for the past 10 years with happy results. Recently, however, some students had taken issue with the fact that I, a man, had presumed to "know" what it was like to be a teenage girl. The teacher asked me what to tell them.

In responding, I said that, however much I disagreed with the injunction to "stay in your lane" as a fiction writer, in this particular case, I hadn't violated it. The collective narration of The Virgin Suicides is an all-male affair. The boys who obsess over the Lisbon girls know little about them. Their cluelessness is the point.

Many readers who write to me do a similar thing but in a more generous spirit. They ask how a guy like me could understand what it's like to be a girl. I tell these correspondents the same thing: it only seems that way. Over the years, I've come to believe that the narrative voice of the novel, and the voyeuristic attention the boys maintain on the girls, creates a negative space where readers can project their own imaginations. The Lisbon girls are never seen from the inside: their mental and emotional life is a matter of conjecture and misinterpretation. Like suicide itself, the truth of their lives is ultimately unknowable.

I don't know what it is, but readers keep finding themselves in the book, generation after generation, as I found my own self, artistically, 30 years ago. Writing this book didn't make it any easier to write the book that came after. But from then on, I knew how to go about it: by paying attention to the world at large and by seeing myself for what I am: an embodied soul, specific, created, neither the main subject nor the person in charge.

This is an edited extract of the foreword to the 30th anniversary special edition of The Virgin Suicides, published on Thursday by Fourth Estate. To support the Guardian and the Observer buy a copy at guardianbookshop.com

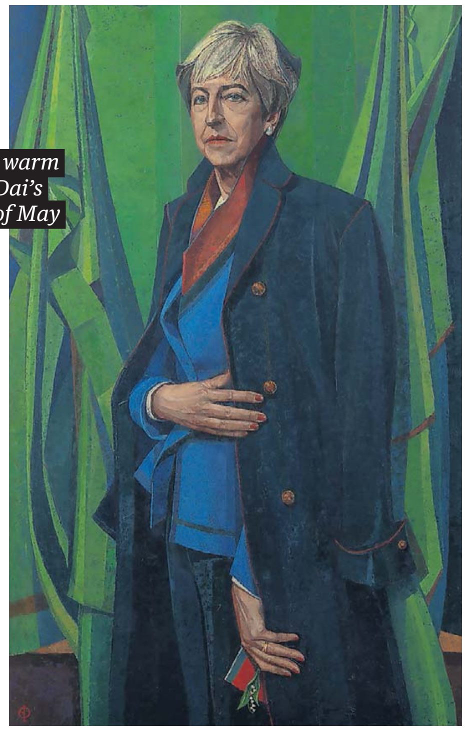
In the UK, Samaritans can be contacted on freephone 116 123, or email jo@samaritans.org

The great women's art bulletin



Katy Hessel

Why is Theresa May cosplaying as Napoleon? Because painters often use male traits to depict women of power



Far from warm … Saied Dai's portrait of May

PHOTOGRAPH: SAIED DAI/PA WIRE

Imagine a leader. What do you see? How are they presented? What are they wearing? Are they up on a platform or down on the ground? In uniform or in a dress? Are they regal and smart? Full frontal or turned to the side? If it's a woman, what comes to mind? Last week, Theresa May's official portrait, by the Persian-born British-based painter Saied Dai, was unveiled. I don't know what I was expecting - but it definitely wasn't this. At first glance, I found her appearance cold and androgynous, the style evoking that of wartime with its muddying palette and sharp angular shapes. The more I sat with it, the more I realised how good a painting it was, with incredible psychological insight into its subject and the times we are living in.

> Michelle Obama's wise, triumphant portrait is the opposite of this one

I was in my early 20s when May was leader. I saw her as a stern ruler detrimental to our future with Europe. She had no dynamism or imagination, just strict, staunch policies and that metronomic "Brexit means Brexit", which now feels like a lifetime ago. Yet here I see her portrayed as both powerful and timid. Dressed in a blue suit, layered with a navy coat, her flesh barely visible, May stands stoically and silently. In her left hand, she clutches a lily of the valley flower signifying the month of May - or is it referencing the wheat she loved to run through? There's a flash of gold, too, with her wedding ring and hints at her femininity with her red nails.

The former PM's gaze is far from warm and her stance feels awkward. While she clearly wants to be seen, there's something holding her back, evident in the right arm crossing her middle as if to protect herself. May's body is concealed by thick, nondescript fabrics that mirror the opaqueness of the green curtain behind, not unlike the backdrop of Agnolo Bronzino's 1550-55 portrait of Lodovico Capponi. Dai encourages us to read this figure as someone who was determined to be militant, her pose emulating Napoleon's in the portrait by Jacques-Louis David. Yet she seems trapped, thwarted by her failure to win the Battle of Brexit.

For me, this portrait also raises bigger questions about what a powerful woman looks like, and how women in politics should be presented in art. In the London Review of Books in 2017, Mary Beard wrote that we have no template for what a powerful woman looks like, except that she looks rather like a man. The suit, although a "simple tactic", is a symbol of patriarchy, a way to make the female more male. Alternatively, there are the "abusers rather than users of power": Medea, Clytemnestra, Antigone. But they are far from role models. So where in art can we see a strong female leader who reflects her times and is depicted in a more nuanced way?

In the 16th century, Elizabeth I was painted wearing rich, sumptuous garments and adorned with jewels, the subtext being that women couldn't be powerful through their bodies alone. But now it seems that, to be taken seriously as a leader, one must appear masculine, shunning all feminine qualities.

In portraits of May's contemporaries, their power is also communicated in complex ways. Angela Merkel, to mark her 10th year in office, was immortalised by Colin Davidson. The painter said Merkel "can appear to be a quite bland and almost cold person, but what I wanted to get across was her humanitarian stance. I wanted to portray the human being behind the politician." Davidson captures a warmth in her eyes, but just focuses on her face. Why not paint her body? Is it because, echoing Beard's remarks about templates, he knows that would muddy the waters?

The antithesis of May's portrait is Amy Sherald's official portrait of Michelle Obama. Triumphant yet approachable, Obama looks at us with a gaze full of wisdom. Not shielding herself from us, she appears present, her arms exposed as if sharing her vulnerability. She is a template of dignity and sophistication. While this might be a groundbreaking portrait for women in power, would things be different if she was the president and not the first lady?

The female leader doesn't just have to overcompensate with jewels or a suit, but with how she rules, too. "I have the body of a weak and feeble woman," said Elizabeth I, "but I have the heart and stomach of a king." Over 400 years, what has changed? Clearly some female politicians still have a desire to be seen as a strong "man-like" woman, from the vicious determination May could show, to Hilary Clinton's macho 2008 boast that the US could "totally obliterate" Iran. During her first term, Margaret Thatcher, perhaps fearing that femininity could be associated with weakness, said: "I owe nothing to women's lib."

May's portrait captures so much of this complexity: striving for the militant stance in the suit, but still hiding from herself, having tried to fit the image of someone she's not. If only we had more dignified women in power, then we would be more comfortable seeing a woman as a woman rather than cosplaying as a man. We might get more compassionate leadership, too, and the resulting portraits would be normalised and immediate.



Fish out of water … Naomi in the finale

Review Alone, Channel 4

Dramatic scenes of survival? More like endless clips of people fishing

★★★☆☆

Jack Seale



The more spectacular a reality show sounds when it's announced, the more deflating it is when the finale doesn't seem like a big event. Alone took 11 Britons and dotted them around the forests of north-west Canada, where they had to use basic survival equipment to stay there for as long as possible, in isolation, filming the experience themselves. They could "tap out" and call to be picked up at any time. After six episodes, 10 of them had done that. The other had won £100,000. On paper, it was one of UK TV's most extreme adventure shows ever, so why does it feel as if nothing much has happened?

Alone has run for 10 seasons in the US, so the format is viable. But the British version has revealed its flaws, the main one being that what makes the challenge tough is what makes it less watchable: everyone is on their own. Strangers collaborating or competing in an extraordinary situation is what makes good reality contests tick, but the survivors in Alone talk only to their video cameras - and a silent gadget isn't as good as another human at drawing out the character beneath the game face. The fact that solitude has proved to be as challenging as hunger is interesting anthropologically, but in terms of entertainment it has left us watching a contest to see which bored, lonely person can stand being bored and lonely the longest.

Alone has tried to overcome this by selecting contestants who have previously experienced trauma or mental health challenges, about which they can monologue inspiringly over a sputtering campfire. As such, we have heard stories of anxiety, autism, depression, physical injury, addiction, poverty, grief and raising a child with learning disabilities.

The moment when a contestant opens up about their hidden battles has become a staple of reality TV and can be powerful. But Alone drank the well dry. When one of the four finalists - sunny and capable Tom, who runs an expedition company - tried to argue that his survival ordeal may finally rid him of his "impostor syndrome", it was hard to avoid thinking that not everyone on telly needs a diagnosis.

Tom has led a charmed life in Canada, his biggest problem being that the wooden shelter he built with his bare hands - four solid walls, a sloping roof with eaves, a closeable front door - was so cosy that mice tried to live in it with him. In the finale, we got confirmation that his solution to this problem - roast mouse for dinner - had not given him food poisoning and his wrist injury had not stopped him fishing. Tom was all set.

Elsewhere, however, fish had become an issue. Dropping the players near the Mackenzie River meant that fishing was by far the easiest way to obtain food, so everyone did it - all the time. There are squirrels, grouse and ducks in that part of the world, but hunting them is a faff, so there have been endless scenes of triumphant river catches and fishy teas. If viewers have tired of it, so have the innards of the woodland manager Alan, another member of the final four. With his stomach refusing to digest any more pike, he tried hunting squirrels. When that failed, he left the competition.

This has been another problem with Alone. Survival is so precarious that a small setback means game over, so the contestants don't have a satisfying narrative arc. They are fine until suddenly they are not fine - and then they are gone.

Naomi, a fashion designer, bailed in third place because she was missing her son too much. This was more than boredom or homesickness: for Naomi, any sign of a relapse into postnatal depression was a dealbreaker. At that point, the show's focus on mental health felt uncomfortable: run the risk of triggering an illness for long enough and win cash!

With Elise, a PR executive, coming second after a combination of mental collapse and starvation - "I feel so weird … my skin is crawling" - Tom's victory was assured. He received the news via his satellite phone while relaxing outside his five-star, rodent-free lodge.

There was time for a where-are-they-now roundup, which revealed that Eva, who made it to the penultimate episode, had resigned as an NHS project manager to teach bushcraft. Tom and his family had moved to Portugal. Everyone else, though, had resumed their old lives, feeling a bit better about them and a bit more grateful for civilisation. The Canadian wilderness seems a long way to go for that.

What's On

Scan the QR code below to sign up for the What's On newsletter, our free TV email with the best reviews, news and exclusive writing direct to your inbox every Monday

My Mum, Your Dad
9pm, ITV1



Davina McCall insists her new dating show, despite being originally pitched as a "middle-aged Love Island", is more than just mugging off, icks and head turns. Over 10 episodes, eight single parents in their 40s and 50s look for love again in a country mansion, while their children secretly observe them from a nearby bunker. Sure, everybody is incredibly attractive, but there is added heart and wisdom, with genuine connections and people really worth rooting for.

Hollie Richardson

Laura Kuenssberg: State of Chaos
9pm, BBC Two
The BBC's former political editor can't complain about a boring career: she has seen the Brexit vote, scandalous resignations, a pandemic and three prime ministers in a single year. In this three-parter, she asks: has our politics been stretched to breaking point and can it ever be normal again? **HR**

Panorama: The Dark Side of Ballet Schools
8pm, BBC One
This investigation looks at two elite ballet schools, in London and Birmingham, hearing allegations from former pupils who say they were pressured into staying a certain weight even when puberty made this difficult. Eating disorders and mental health problems were, it's claimed, the result.
Jack Seale

Top Guns: Inside the RAF
9pm, Channel 4
This observational documentary reveals Britain's fighter pilots to be a sensible lot. They don't go in for any of the airborne peacocking that Maverick and Goose indulged in. And just as well, because high over Syria, young pilot Buzz is encountering a Russian aircraft, just as his wingman suffers a cockpit emergency.
Ellen E Jones

Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty
9pm, Sky Atlantic
The turbulent basketball story continues to work as a human melodrama and a potted social history of the 80s. The Lakers have got what they wanted: everybody hates and fears them in equal measure. But with vulnerabilities showing after a series of defeats, can they handle the challenge presented by the Boston Celtics?
Phil Harrison

Starstruck
10pm, BBC Three
The more single Rose Matafeo's Jessie gets, the more interesting she becomes, which makes this the best Starstruck season yet. But will Tom throw her off course in the last two episodes? Jessie has a lonely but eventful 33rd birthday to contend with as Tom puts the finishing touches to his wedding plans, but inevitably the two collide.
Hannah Verdier

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **9.15** Morning Live (T) **10.0** Critical Incident (T) (R) **10.45** Expert Witness (T) (R) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **12.15** Bargain Hunt (T) **1.0** News (T) **1.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.45** Doctors (T) **2.15** Money for Nothing (T) **3.0** Escape to the Country (T) **3.45** Garden Rescue (T) **4.30** The Finish Line (T) **5.15** Pointless (T) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **7.0** The One Show (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

8.0 **Panorama: The Dark Side of Ballet Schools** (T) Current affairs investigation.
8.30 **Garden Rescue** (T) (R) Charlie Dimmock and Lee Burkhill create a tranquil wildlife-friendly garden for a busy GP.
9.0 **Who Do You Think You Are?** (T) (R) Singer Boy George traces the story of his maternal grandmother.

10.0 **News** (T)
10.30 **Regional News** (T) Weather
10.40 **The Hit List** (T) (R) A Strictly Come Dancing special with Tyler West, Dianne Buswell, Kym Marsh, James Bye, Molly Rainford and Carlos Gu.
11.25 **Question of Sport** (T) (R) Highlights of the past 12 months on the show.
11.55 **Weather** (T) **12.0** **News** (T)

BBC Two

6.30 **Bargain Hunt** (T) (R) **7.15** Garden Rescue (T) (R) **8.0** Sign Zone: This Farming Life (T) (R) **9.0** Nicky Campbell (T) **10.0** News (T) **12.15** Politics Live (T) **1.0** Impossible (T) (R) **1.45** Eggheads (T) (R) **2.15** Murder, Mystery and My Family (T) (R) **3.0** The Wonder of Animals (T) (R) **3.30** Great British Railway Journeys (T) (R) **4.0** Who Do You Think You Are? (T) (R) **5.0** Flog It! (T) (R) **6.0** House of Games (T) **6.30** Tales from a Kitchen Garden (T) **7.0** Wild Summer (T) (R) **7.30** Mastermind (T)

8.0 **Only Connect** (T) Victoria Coren Mitchell hosts.
8.30 **University Challenge** (T) Balliol College, Oxford take on Imperial College London.
9.0 **Laura Kuenssberg: State of Chaos** (T) New series. A look at whether UK politics has been stretched to breaking point following the EU referendum.

10.0 **The Royle Family** (T) (R)
10.30 **Newsnight** (T) Weather
11.15 FILM **What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?** (Robert Aldrich, 1962) (T) Drama, with Bette Davis and Joan Crawford.
1.25 **Sign Zone** Dame Judi Dench Countryfile Special (T) (R) **2.20** Celebrity MasterChef (T) (R) **3.20** Mrs Brown's Boys (T) **3.50** This Is BBC Two (T)

ITV1

6.0 **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.55** Local News and Weather (T) **2.0** James Martin's Spanish Adventure (T) **3.0** Tenable (T) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) **5.0** The Chase (T) **6.0** Local News and Weather (T) **6.30** News and Weather (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

8.0 **Coronation Street** (T) Dee-Dee fails to twig Joel's real motive, and Roy helps Lauren.
9.0 **My Mum, Your Dad** (T) New series. Dating show hosted by Davina McCall, which follows eight single parents who have been nominated by their grownup children for a second chance at love.

10.0 **News** (T) Weather
10.30 **Local News** (T) Weather
10.45 **Mel Giedroyc and Martin Clunes Explore Britain By the Book** (T) (R)
11.40 **My Mum, Your Dad** (T) (R)
12.30 **All Elite Wrestling** (T) (R) **2.10** Tipping Point (T) (R) **3.0** Tenable (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Spanish Adventure (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.05 **Countdown** (T) (R) **6.45** Cheers (T) (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **8.25** Frasier (T) (R) **9.55** Chateau DIY (T) (R) **10.55** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces (T) (R) **11.55** News (T) **12.0** Steph's Packed Lunch (T) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** A Place in the Sun (T) (R) **5.0** Four in a Bed (T) (R) **5.30** Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **6.0** Hollyoaks (T) (R) **7.0** News (T)

8.0 **A Cotswold Farmshop** (T) Buyer Jane, who looks after the farm shop's selection of beer, is keen to find out why the locally produced malt makes some of the local brews so special. Last in the series.
9.0 **Top Guns: Inside the RAF** (T) Young pilot Buzz encounters a Russian aircraft over Syria.

10.0 **Bear Grylls Meets President Zelenskyy** (T) (R)
11.05 **24 Hours in A&E** (T) (R)
12.05 **The Queens That Changed the World** (T) **1.0** The Duchess and Her Magical Kingdom (T) **1.55** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) **2.45** Screw (T) **3.40** Grand Designs (T) (R) **4.30** Location, Location, Location (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake!** **9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **11.15** Storm Huntley (T) **12.40** Alexis Conran (T) **1.40** News (T) **1.45** Home and Away (T) (R) **2.15** FILM Secrets By the Shore (Jacob Cooney, 2022) (T) **4.0** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun (T) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Susan Calman's Grand Day Out (T) (R) **7.0** Motorway Cops: Catching Britain's Speeders (T) (R)

8.0 **Police Interceptors** (T) Macca pursues a stolen Ford whose occupants then run off into a field.
9.0 **The Inheritance** (T) As Dennis's death becomes the subject of an official police investigation, the siblings hunt for their father's previous will to prove his original intentions.

10.0 **The Killing Kind** (T) New series. Thriller, with Emma Appleton and Colin Morgan.
11.05 **Ambulance: Code Red** (T) (R)
12.0 **Police Interceptors** (T) (R) **1.0** Live NFL (T) (T) **4.40** Great Artists (T) (R) **5.05** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.35** Milkshake! Monkey's Amazing Adventures (T) (R) **5.45** Paw Patrol (T) (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **Great Coastal Railway Journeys** (T) (R) Michael Portillo crosses the Glenfinnan Viaduct. **7.30** The Riviera: A History in Pictures (T) (R) With Richard E Grant.

8.30 **Royal History's Biggest Fibs With Lucy Worsley** (T) (R) The historian re-examines Queen Anne, and how her capabilities have been tainted by a tell-all story.
9.30 **The Sky at Night** (T) (R) A visit to Chile's Atacama Desert and one of the most advanced observatories in the world, the VLT.

10.0 **Edward Heath Remembered By Michael Cockerell** (T)
10.10 **A Very Singular Man: A Film Portrait of Edward Heath** (T) (R) A 1998 profile.
11.10 **Invasion! With Sam Willis** (T) (R) Barbary Corsaire pirates.
12.10 **The Shock of the New** (T) (R) **2.10** Great Coastal Railway Journeys (T) (R) **2.40** Royal History's Biggest Fibs (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three
7.0pm The Blue Planet **8.0** Top Gear America **8.35** Ghosts US **8.55** New Creatives **8.55** The Catch Up **9.0** Bad Behaviour **10.0** Starstruck **10.20** Starstruck **10.50** Ellie & Natasia **11.10** Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne **11.55** Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne **12.40** Boot Dreams: Now Or Never **1.40** Starstruck **2.0** Starstruck **2.30** Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne **3.15** Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne

Dave
6.0am Teleshopping **7.10** Scrapyard Supercar **8.0** Top Gear **9.0** DIY SOS: The Big Build **10.0** Exploration Volcano **11.0** Rick Stein's Road to Mexico **12.0** Storage Hunters UK **12.30** Storage Hunters UK **1.0** Sin City Motors **2.0** Top Gear **3.0** Top Gear **4.0** Australian Ninja Warrior **5.30** Gino's Italian Escape **6.0** Rick Stein's Spain **7.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **7.40** Richard Osman's House of Games **8.20** Would I Lie to You? **9.0** QI XL **10.0** QI XL **10.40** QI XL **11.20** QI XL **12.0** Mock the Week **12.40** Would I Lie to You? **1.20** Schitt's Creek **2.30** Richard Osman's House of Games **3.0** Live at the Moth Club **4.0** Teleshopping

E4
6.0am Hollyoaks **6.30** Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **8.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **9.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **10.0** The Big Bang Theory **10.30** The Big Bang Theory **11.0** Modern Family **11.30** Modern Family **12.0** The Big Bang Theory **12.30** The Big Bang Theory **1.0** The Big Bang Theory **1.30** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** The Goldbergs **2.30** The Goldbergs **3.0** Modern Family **3.30** Modern Family **4.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.0** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** Young Sheldon **8.0** First Dates Ireland **9.0** Celebs Go Dating **10.0** Gogglebox **11.05** Naked Attraction **12.10** Cruel Summer **1.10** First Dates **2.10** Celebs Go Dating **3.05** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **3.55** The Goldbergs **4.20** The Goldbergs **4.45** Black-ish **5.10** Black-ish

Film4
11.0am FILM It Should Happen to You (1954) **12.45** FILM The Swimmer (1968) **2.35** FILM Went the Day Well? (1942) **4.25** FILM Sands of Iwo Jima (1949) **6.40** FILM The Day After Tomorrow (2004) **9.0** FILM xXx (2002) **11.30** FILM Naked (1993) **2.10** FILM Night of the Kings (2021)

ITV2
6.0am CITV **9.0** One Tree Hill **10.0** Dawson's Creek **11.0** Love Bites **12.0** Dinner Date **1.0** Family Fortunes **2.0** Chuck **3.05** One Tree Hill **4.0** Dawson's Creek **5.0** Dinner Date **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.0** Family Fortunes **8.0** Superstore **8.30** Superstore **9.0** Family Guy **9.30** American Dad! **10.0** American Dad! **10.30** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.0** Superstore **12.30** Superstore **1.0** Shopping With Keith Lemon **1.30** Celebrity Karaoke Club **2.25** The Sex Lives of College Girls **2.55** Unwind With ITV **3.0** Teleshopping **5.0** The Epic Tales of Captain Underpants **5.25** Scooby-Doo! Mystery Incorporated **5.45** Craig of the Creek

Sky Max
6.0am Supergirl **7.0** DC's Legends of Tomorrow **8.0** The Flash **9.0** Stargate Atlantis **11.0** Supergirl **12.0** The Flash **1.0** NCIS: Los Angeles **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** S.W.A.T **5.0** DC's Legends of Tomorrow **6.0** Stargate Atlantis **8.0** There's Something About Movies **9.0** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **9.45** Brassic **10.45** Brassic **11.45** Cobra: Cyberwar **12.45** Road Wars **1.40** Road Wars **2.10** Stop, Search, Seize **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** S.W.A.T **5.0** Highway Patrol

Sky Arts
6.0am Hollywood in Vienna: A Night at the Oscars **8.0** The Joy of Painting **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Ben Kingsley **12.0** The Joy of Painting **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** Vermeer from the National Gallery, London **3.0** Wordsworth & Coleridge Road Trip With Frank Skinner and Denise Mina **4.0** Discovering: Helen Mirren **5.0** Tales of the Unexpected **5.30** Tales of the Unexpected **6.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **6.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.0** The Joy of Painting **7.30** The Joy of Painting **8.0** André Rieu & Friends: Live in Maastricht VII **11.15** Katharine Hepburn: Call Me Kate **1.15** Darbar Festival 2022 **2.30** Chris O'Dowd: Off Camera **3.45** National Trust: Garden Treasures **5.0** The South Bank Show Originals **5.30** The South Bank Show Originals

Sky Atlantic
6.0am Fish Town **7.55** The Leftovers **10.05** Ray Donovan **12.15** Game of Thrones **1.20** This England **3.30** The Leftovers **5.45** Ray Donovan **7.55** Game of Thrones **9.0** Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty **10.05** Euphoria **11.10** Dreamland **11.40** Billions **1.55** Drift: Partners in Crime **2.55** Game of Thrones **4.0** Fish Town


What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?, BBC Two

Radio

Radio 3
6.30am Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: Carlos Chávez (1/5) **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. Live from London's Wigmore Hall, pianist Paul Lewis and the Vertavo Quartet perform an all-Beethoven programme. **2.0** Afternoon Concert. The BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Johan Dalene in Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. Plus, Delius's Petite Suite No 2 performed by the BBC Concert Orchestra. **4.30** New Generation Artists. Violinist María Dueñas plays Vitali's Chaconne. **5.0** In Tune **7.0** Classical Mixtape **7.30** In Concert. Gustavo Dudamel conducts the Simón Bolivar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela and cuatro player Jorge Glem in Paul Desenne's Guasamacabra, Gonzalo Grau's Odisea, Concerto for Cuatro and Orchestra, and Mahler's Symphony No 1. **10.0** Music Matters (R) **10.45** The Essay: Unearthing Britannia's Tribes. Examining the peoples of iron age Britain, beginning with archaeologist David Miles on the Cantiaci of Kent. (R) **11.0** Night Tracks **12.30** Through the Night

Radio 4
6.0am Today **9.0** Is Psychiatry Working? (R) **9.30** Shock and War: Iraq 20 Years On (R) **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: Adam Smith – What He Thought and Why It Matters. By Jesse Norman. (1/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** The Gift. Jenny Kleeman uncovers extraordinary truths that emerge when people take DNA tests. (1/6) **11.30** Analysis (R) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** You and Yours **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** The Immortals. Longevity innovators trying to eliminate death. (6/10) **2.0** The Archers **2.15** This Cultural Life (R) **3.0** Brain of Britain (5/17) **3.30** BBC National Short Story Award 2023 (1/5) **4.0** History's Secret Heroes. Two eccentric French artists perform an extraordinary act of resistance. (R) **4.30** Beyond Belief. Aleem Maqbool talks to a crematorium manager. (5/8) **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.30** Paul Sinha's Perfect Pub Quiz. (2/10) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.0** Lego Overboard. The story of a shipment of Lego washed ashore on the coast of Cornwall. **8.30** Crossing Continents. Surviving Greece's migrant boat disaster. (R) **9.0** The Archbishop Interviews (R) **9.30** Is Psychiatry Working? (R) **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: The Exhibitionist. By Charlotte Mendelson. (6/10) **11.0** The Food Programme (R) **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.0** News **12.30** Book of the Week (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day (R)

Radio 4 Extra
6.0am Strong Poison (6/6) **6.30** Berkely Mather: The Hard Buy (5/8) **7.0** Casanova in London (1/5) **7.15** Agnes Grey (1/5) **7.30** A Month of June (4/4) **8.0** Stop Messing About! (11/13) **8.30** Radio Cars (5/5) **9.0** The Write Stuff (6/6) **9.30** Alison and Maud (4/6) **10.0** The Psychedelic Spy (1/5) **10.45** Short Works **11.0** Strong Poison (6/6) **11.30** Berkely Mather (5/8) **12.0** Casanova in London (1/5) **12.15** Agnes Grey (1/5) **12.30** A Month of June (4/4) **1.0** Stop Messing About! (11/13) **1.30** Radio Cars (5/5) **2.0** The Write Stuff (6/6) **2.30** Alison and Maud (4/6) **3.0** The Psychedelic Spy (1/5) **3.45** Short Works **4.0** Strong Poison (6/6) **4.30** Berkely Mather (5/8) **5.0** Casanova in London (1/5) **5.15** Agnes Grey (1/5) **5.30** A Month of June (4/4) **6.0** Stop Messing About! (11/13) **6.30** Radio Cars (5/5) **7.0** The Write Stuff (6/6) **7.30** Alison and Maud (4/6) **8.0** Radiolab (2/8) **8.55** Inheritance Tracks **9.0** Mastertapes (6/12) **9.30** Eye of the Cricket (6/10) **10.0** Paul Sinha's Perfect Pub Quiz (1/10) **10.30** Small Scenes (1/4) **11.0** The News Quiz (1/8) **11.30** Lee and Herring's Fist of Fun (2/6) **12.0** The Psychedelic Spy (1/5) **12.45** Short Works **1.0** Strong Poison (6/6) **1.30** Berkely Mather (5/8) **2.0** Casanova in London (1/5) **2.15** Agnes Grey (1/5) **2.30** A Month of June (4/4) **3.0** Stop Messing About! (11/13) **3.30** Radio Cars (5/5) **4.0** The Write Stuff (6/6) **4.30** Alison and Maud (4/6) **5.0** The Psychedelic Spy (2/5) **5.45** Short Works

Puzzles

Friday's solutions

Wordsearch

E	R	F	S	N	U	B	W	D
C	I	E	I	N	S	I	E	N
I	T	R	T	O	I	T	A	R
C	O	L	D	T	T	E	L	E
N	W	A	O	O	U	D	T	K
P	H	E	L	S	N	B	D	C
E	I	C	K	A	A	O	R	A
S	P	A	H	A	U	L	I	R
O	P	N	S	B	C	E	A	C
U	E	O	L	L	S	U	N	D
R	D	E	H	S	E	R	F	T

Sudoku no 6,195

9	5	6	1	4	7	2	8	3
8	7	4	5	3	2	9	6	1
1	2	3	8	6	9	4	5	7
2	8	5	6	7	3	1	9	4
3	9	7	4	1	5	6	2	8
6	4	1	2	9	8	7	3	5
7	6	8	3	2	1	5	4	9
5	1	2	9	8	4	3	7	6
4	3	9	7	5	6	8	1	2

Suguru

3	2	5	1	3	1
4	1	4	2	4	2
3	2	5	1	3	5
4	1	3	2	4	1
3	2	5	1	5	2
1	4	3	2	3	1

Word wheel
ABDICATED

Saturday's Quick crossword
Solution no 16,644

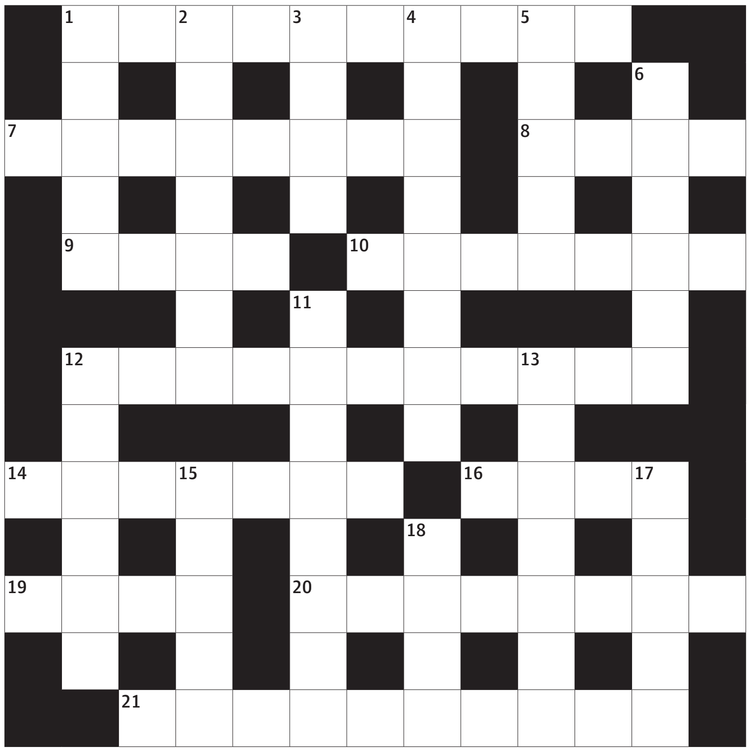
Z	E	R	O		Z	A	M	B	I	A	N	S
A		E				M		L		P		O
N	A	S	A		L	A	Z	I	N	E	S	S
Z		E		B		Z		T		X		O
I	N	T	E	R	M	E	Z	Z	O			
B		T		A		D		K		S		E
A	B	L	A	Z	E		P	R	O	T	E	M
R		E		I		B		I		R		B
			S	L	E	A	Z	E	B	A	L	L
B		S		N		R		G		T		A
O	B	I	T	U	A	R	Y		F	I	Z	Z
Z		Z		T		I				F		O
O	V	E	R	S	E	E	R		H	Y	M	N

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Quick crossword no 16,645

Across
1 Someone unfamiliar with sailing (10)
7 Most abundant chemical substance in the universe (8)
8 Delighted (4)
9 Make a leonine noise (4)
10 Soft soap (from a stone in County Cork?) (7)
12 Somerset's annual performing arts festival (11)
14 Contemporary (7)
16 Highly excited (4)
19 Part of speech (4)
20 Praised fulsomely (8)
21 Bollinger and Veuve Clicquot, for example - weaken rims (anag) (10)

Down
1 Creature that produces eggs? (5)
2 Ivan ran (anag) - US grunge band (7)
3 Racing sled (4)
4 Incompetent (8)
5 Keen (5)
6 To wit (6)
11 Prehistoric period (5,3)
12 Forced out (6)
13 Improvement - dear pug (anag) (7)
15 Jewish scholar (5)
17 Suppose (5)
18 Cat - sportswear brand (4)



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Sudoku no 6,199

Easy. Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9. Printable version at theguardian.com/sudoku

	5		7	1			9	
1		7			6	4	5	
	6	1		3			4	8
						1		2
	2	5		6			7	9
9		2			3	6	1	
	1		4	9			8	

Suguru

Fill the grid so that each square in an outlined block contains a digit. A block of two squares contains the digits 1 and 2, a block of three squares contains the digits 1, 2 and 3, and so on. No same digit appears in neighbouring squares, not even diagonally.

5					3
	3				4
		2			
	4				2

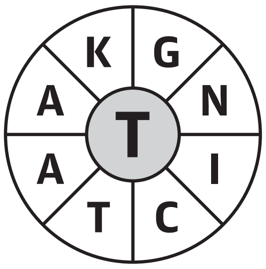
Wordsearch

Can you find 15 words about banks in the grid? Words can run forwards, backwards, vertically or diagonally, but always in a straight, unbroken line.

S	N	I	O	C	T	D	G	S
S	A	V	I	N	G	S	M	M
B	A	N	K	F	L	K	V	R
T	Q	L	O	R	T	I	C	O
D	U	O	E	I	H	A	N	F
R	E	A	C	C	S	O	C	E
T	U	N	N	H	N	N	H	E
R	E	A	A	I	I	E	E	L
G	R	M	L	O	Y	T	Q	P
B	Y	R	A	L	A	S	U	P
E	D	E	B	T	P	D	E	R

Word wheel

Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found. TARGET: Excellent-29. Good-24. Average-18.



Trivia corner

What year did Bong Joon-ho win the Oscar for best director?
a. 2019
b. 2020
c. 2021
d. 2022
Answer top right

